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ABSTRACT

There is an immense gap between the success that Maine's elementary school children achieve on national tests and the rate at which they go on to postsecondary education. This gap is not explained by Maine's low per capita income. Maine's homogeneous population created a culture valuing hard work, independence, pragmatism, family, community, tolerance of eccentricity, and love of the land, yet displaying characteristics of "peasant" society such as fatalism, pettiness, and insularity. Children are taught to respect adults, work hard, and graduate from high school, but the culture does not value postsecondary education. The state's history also impacts its educational system. Into the economic void resulting from the Civil War came paying guests searching for a romantic vision of Maine. Some visitors had different values and made local people serving them feel inferior, a pattern that continues. This dissertation examines the influence of culture and individual and collective histories on academic aspirations through an ethnographic case study of the small town of Tremont on Mount Desert Island, a resort area of rural Maine. Chapters discuss (1) research methods; (2) the development of self and aspirations; (3) the culture and history of Tremont, Maine, and the conflict between native and dominant cultures; (4) the history of Maine; (5) a portrait of Tremont; (6) schooling on Mount Desert Island; (7) the Tremont community and elementary school; (8) students' transition to the consolidated high school; (9) interviews about factors that influence student decisions about postsecondary education; and (10) conclusions and parallels to other rural experiences. An epilogue offers suggestions that build on the strengths of Tremont's people. Appendices describe the Student Aspirations Survey and present survey results. Contains tables, figures, charts, photographs, and 189 references. (Author/TD)

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BOSTON UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Dissertation

WORKING MEMORY: The Influence of Culture on Aspirations

by

BARBARA KENT LAWRENCE

B.A. Bennington College, 1965
M.A. New York University, 1968

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education
1998

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Approved by

First Reader

Charles L. Glenn, Ph.D., Ed.D.
Professor of Education

Second Reader

Parker Shipton, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Anthropology

Third Reader

Jay W. Simmons, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Education

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I had a terrific committee. I credit myself with the wisdom to have chosen three men who had different perspectives, but similar interest in helping me hone my own skills, and who worked well together; I thank them for agreeing to work with me. Charles Glenn knew when to leave me alone and when to pull or push me to rethink or rewrite. Parker Shipton provided thoughtful reading of my text and an anchor in anthropology from which I draw much of my framework. Jay Simmons first gave me a sense of delight in writing and then shepherded me through the dissertation. I am deeply grateful for the many contributions of my Three Musketeers, not only during the process of researching and writing the dissertation, but throughout the courses I took with them that made me want to work with them again.

This has been a labor of love. I thank each of the people on Mount Desert Island, and particularly in Tremont, with whom I have spoken over the years and without whose insight I would never have conceived of or completed this study. Especially I thank Principal Val Perkins, Superintendent Howard Colter, Dr. Richard Sherwood of the Maine State Planning Office, Dr. Horace 'Brud' Maxcy and Mr. Frank Antonucci of the Maine Department of Education.

Finally, at the risk of sounding frivolous, I thank my cat Mac, who sat for endless hours on my desk while I worked in front of the computer or next to me on the couch while I read, amusing me and keeping me company in what might otherwise have been, at times, a lonely process.

WORKING MEMORY:
THE INFLUENCE OF CULTURE ON ASPIRATION

(Order No.)

BARBARA KENT LAWRENCE

Boston University, School of Education, 1998

Charles L. Glenn, Professor of Education

ABSTRACT

Through the prism of culture and history I look at the immense gap between the success Maine's elementary school children achieve on national tests and the rate at which they go on to post-secondary education. In a state with low per capita income, college tuition is a daunting barrier; however, it is only a small part of the reason Maine students do not pursue post-secondary education.

Forged on the eastern frontier and isolated by geography, Maine's homogeneous "Yankee" population created a culture valuing hard work, independence, pragmatism, family, community, tolerance of eccentricity, love of the land, and abhorrence of debt, and displaying characteristics of "peasant" society including fatalism, pettiness, and insularity. Today 70.6% of Mainers were born in Maine, and the population is 98.4% white. Children are taught to respect adults, work hard and graduate from high school, but a high school degree is thought sufficient.

The history of the state also impacts the education of its children. The Civil War devastated Maine's once thriving economy. Into an economic void came people searching for a romantic vision of Maine, created and sustained because it attracted paying guests. Some visitors had different values and made local people serving them feel inferior, a pattern that continues. The pattern of migrating to find work had other insidious effects.

We see the effects of this history and self-image in a small rural school in which the families, community and school work together to educate children. However, we also see that these

children, remarkably successful throughout grammar school, falter in high school for reasons that tie directly to the culture and history of the area. The high school is not so nurturing and supportive, parents are physically, psychologically and socially distanced from the high school, and the culture does not value post-secondary education.

What explains the enormous gap between the academic success of young children in Tremont, Maine and the rate at which they go on to post-secondary education? Only their total environment, including the past, present, and the way those project on their future, what I call their "working memory."

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the memory of my step-father, Desmond FitzGerald, who gave me a sense of the value of my mind and exercise in using it.

WORKING MEMORY: The Influence of Culture on Aspirations
A Case Study of Tremont, Maine

"It is a poor sort of memory that only works backwards."

The title of my dissertation comes from a line in Through the Looking Glass that my stepfather was fond of and quoted enough so that when he died the Central Intelligence Agency, for which he worked, used it to introduce a book commemorating his life.

"Living backwards!" Alice repeated in great astonishment. "I never heard of such a thing!"
"--but there's one great advantage in it, that one's memory works both ways."
"I'm sure that mine only works one way," Alice remarked. "I can't remember things before they happen."
"It's a poor sort of memory that only works backwards," the Queen remarked.
Carroll, 1981:155

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PROLOGUE

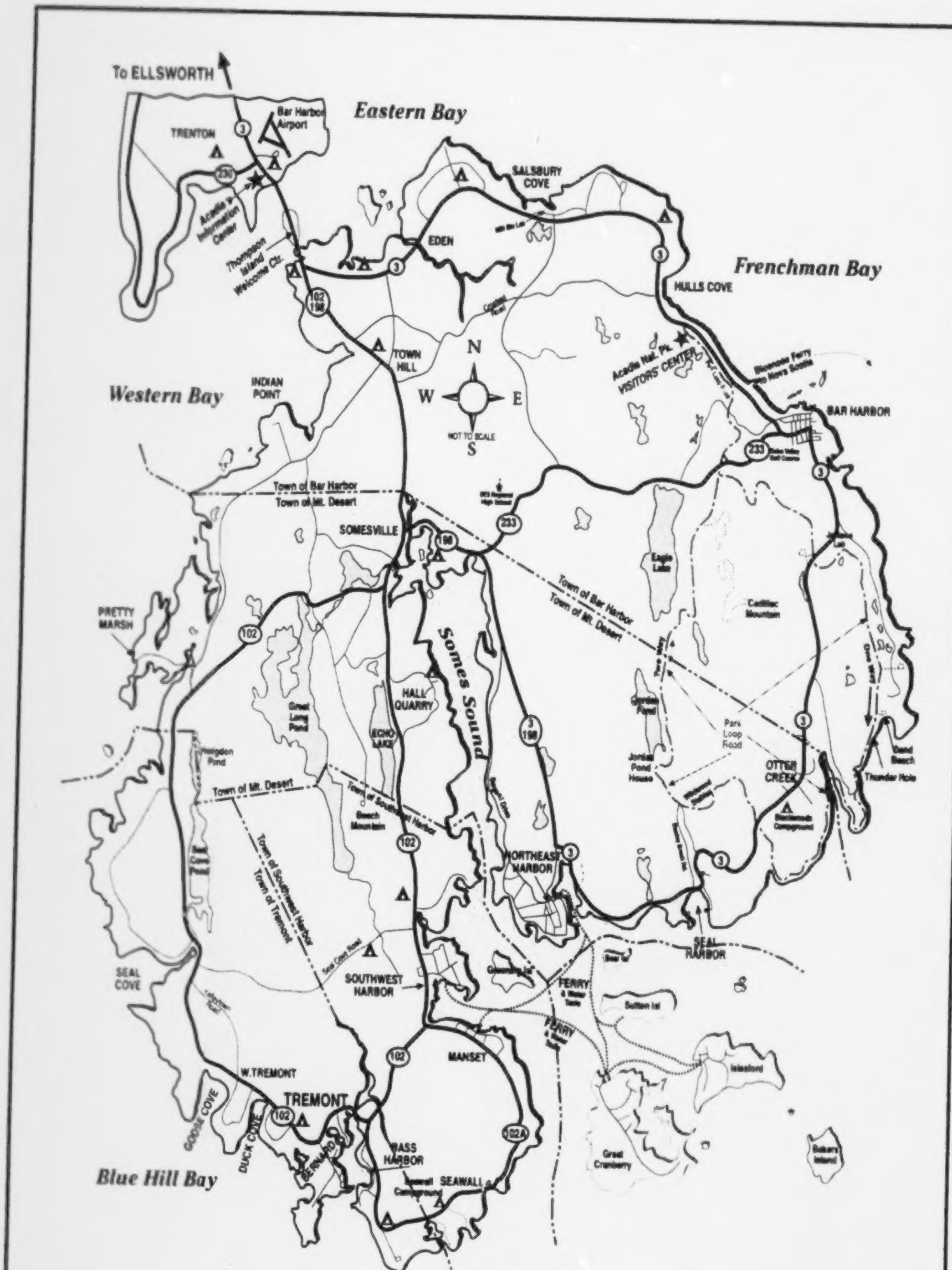
First Impression

In 1948, when I was five years old, my new stepfather brought my mother and me to his summer home in Northeast Harbor on Mount Desert Island in Maine. That summer was the first after the fire of 1947 had charred almost one-third of the island. Driving down a road you looked to one side and found only blackened stumps of trees, a nightmare landscape. On the other side, the land might be unharmed, green birches and oak trees lining the road and at unexpected moments open to the ocean beyond. It was hard to make sense of the beauty and the ugliness side by side. I see it now as a metaphor for the strange dichotomy I have come to know over the past forty-seven years, first as a summer child, then as a "year-round summer person," and most recently as a doctoral student.

While tourists and summer visitors may see only the beauty of a fantasy on their vacations, those who live on the island year-round must deal with many contradictory forces: a climate harsh in winter, entrancing in summer; long periods of isolation followed by a short, intense season when millions visit; the enormous wealth of summer residents contrasted with the bitter poverty of some year-round families; highly sophisticated professionals "from-away" living in villages with traditional people who may not have finished high school.

Tremont Memories

I first came to the town of Tremont, though I didn't know where I was, when my family visited Charlie and his wife Freddie, who were as close to being "Bohemians" as my parents got. Charlie, an artist, was a tough ox of a man with a barrel chest and ocean blue eyes. He intimidated me unintentionally until I was an adult because he was so open and seemed to take


To ELLSWORTH
Eastern Bay
TRENTON
Bar Harbor Airport
230
3
Acadia Information Center
Thompson Island Welcome Ctr.
SALSBURY COVE
EDEN
Frenchman Bay
HULLS COVE
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Great Long Pond
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Hodgdon Pond
Town of Mt. Desert
Town of Southwest Harbor
Beech Mountain
Jordan Pond
Jordan Pond House
Park Loop Road
OTTER CREEK
Sand Beach
Thunder Hole
Blackwoods Campground
Seal Cove Pond
Town of Southwest Harbor
Town of Tremont
NORTHEAST HARBOR
SEAL HARBOR
SEAL COVE
SOUTHWEST HARBOR
FERRY
Sutton Isl
MANSET
Islesford
W.TREMONT
TREMONT
GOOSE COVE
DUCK COVE
BERNARD
BASS HARBOR
Seawall Campground
SEAWALL
102A
Great Cranberry
Baker's Island
Blue Hill Bay

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my opinions, as long as I had some, seriously. Freckled Fredericka was warm and funny, an inspired cook who delighted in offering foods like 'Moules mariniere,' with mussels just plucked from pink granite rocks and urchins wincing from their first and last taste of lemon. Freddie could be a little intimidating too, until my tastes matured.

To visit them, their two daughters, and their son Johnny, who was my age, was to venture to a world apart from the familiar, correct, and staid society of Northeast Harbor. Like pioneers they had carved a road, laid the cord-de-roi, and built a house with their own hands and sweat that scrambled over the rocks of the promontory jutting into Blue Hill Bay.[1] Our annual trek to their home in Bernard, a fishing village in Tremont, seemed an adventure to the end of the earth. I didn't understand yet that Charlie and Freddie were refugees from proper Washington society.

When, as an adult, I moved to Mount Desert in 1979, people I consulted about the schools told me to consider any town but Tremont, the home of rough "backsiders" who were a bit wild, unpredictable, and definitely inhospitable. I was told that the school was very limited and that my children would not be welcomed. So we didn't even look for property in Tremont and settled in Southwest Harbor. Slowly, I began to see Tremont and its school differently. During our first year in Southwest Harbor, I talked with a young woman who had moved from Tremont to Southwest Harbor with her two sons. "How do they like their new school?" I asked.

"Oh they love it," she replied.

"Well, that's great. What exactly do they like?" I continued, thinking it would be the improved facilities, being in a larger school, or having more skilled teachers.

"Oh, they like that they did all the same work last year in Tremont and they don't have to do any work now," she answered.

Two years later, wanting to move from the harshness of winter on the bold ocean, blasted by icy winds in a house designed for summer, and wanting more space and solitude, we bought an old farm on a pond in Tremont with diverse habitats that attracted otter, eagles, fox, beaver, clouds of tree swallows swooping over the pond, and my favorites, the loons, yodeling mysteriously in the night. It was a place where I could nurture endless gardens and watch the yearly rotation of birds and animals: otter cubs in spring, swirling in rough-house around the perimeter of the pond; incompetent young osprey trying to catch trout; fox denning on the hillside over the driveway in fall; sturdy beaver relentlessly chewing through poplar, skinning them to stick in the mud below their lodges; in winter, the tracks of fisher, marten, and coyotes that marked our house as theirs.

---

[1] Charlie has told the story of building their house in his wonderful book, *Roots in the Rock*. (Child, 1964).

Our son was in boarding school, and we intended to let our daughter continue going to school in Southwest Harbor. However, this was inconvenient and we had to pay tuition; so, under protest, she agreed to try Tremont Grammar School for a week. After two days with a quivering chin, she settled in, and we were increasingly touched by the kindness and support of her teachers, the Principal, and her new friends. She was welcomed immediately, not made to feel special or different, just accepted as an individual like the children from families that had lived in the Town for five generations were.

What You See Is What You Get

As a real estate broker I have taken many clients "from away" to Tremont to look at shorefront property that is more affordable than it is elsewhere on the Island. I realize each time that they are seeing a different reality than I see. They see the little houses bunched along the main road, or clustered in the harbors and down peninsulas, some cluttered with lobster traps and bait shacks, others with improbable storage buildings: listing gazebos, metal sheds, or a rusted orange railroad car that the present owners have gotten for the price of hauling away. They see the toilet, like half an avocado lolling in a front yard, stuffed with orange marigolds in summer, or the tire, cut like Jughead's cap, encircling a bed of petunias. They see, but don't always understand, the things accumulated in case they become useful: derelict cars, discarded pots and buckets that once held spackling compound. They frown at deer antlers hung above tilted garage doors, or in fall, the whole carcass swaying from a tree limb, or the pink plastic flamingoes poised next to caped snow mobiles awaiting winter. They see a crazy quilt of houses along Route 102A, reflecting changing tastes, not zoning: an A frame, log cabins, old Capes encased in asbestos shingles - one, overlooking Seal Cove Pond, its roof outlined with seagulls standing at attention. They see old houses married - two singles attached at odd angles because salvaging was cheaper than building. They don't see much of the ocean because it is hidden from the main road, nor do they easily find the large estates owned by summer families, their refuges from the social rigors of Northeast and Seal Harbors.

When I am alone, I drive my rusting Blue Toyota truck down 102A. I see where my daughter had an accident and totaled our car on a patch of black ice, rescued immediately by a neighbor who called the ambulance when, from his kitchen window, he saw the wheels of our Cherokee spinning in the air. He cut her and her friend out of their seat-belts while other men stopped their trucks and got out to calm the two frightened girls, waiting with them for half an hour until we could get there from the other side of the island.

I see where the Postmistress dispenses stamps and compassion, binding a community with stories of births and deaths, successes and failures, and where she and her husband have fostered many abused children, some of them from far away. I see where Ralph and his wife raised a daughter who saw the Nutcracker on television when she was five and wanted to dance. Each week they drove her to lessons, then rehearsals, and finally helped her go to dance school in Pennsylvania. I see the little gray house where John and Shirley have raised five children, all of whom have gone to college though Shirley has battled cancer and John had a massive heart attack while four of the children were at the university. I see the tiny crab shack next to the house, imagine Shirley's swollen hands, thick with arthritis, and wonder how many crabs those hands have picked of their flesh for the sake of her children's schooling. I see the cans on the store counters alongside the bottles of boiled eggs, asking for donations with scrawled notes and cracked photographs of lobster sternmen who have lost their boats or their lives, or of children who need an operation, for whom insurance was never a possibility.

I see Herb, a walrus of a man, though he has slimmed down in the past few years since his heart trouble, who dug septic systems for neighbors who couldn't pay, taking a scrap of land in exchange because it was all they had to give, then trying to hide the transaction from his wife Marie when it appeared in the newspaper because she would be angry that he had done the work "for free." Over the years he has built an earth-moving business that succors his sons and their families, as well as the families of about fifty other men, but he still lives in a little house, wears green overalls and drives his trucks until they bleat for mercy and shudder to a stop.

I see Billy, standing with Elizabeth at the end of our road, waiting for the school bus in the cold mist of a fall morning.

"Lizbeth, I dun a terrible thing. A terrible thing."

"What, Billy?"

"I was aiming for the buck, but I shot the doe."

And I think of Billy, who has now served his country in Bosnia and Iraq, and know that his aim improved, much as it did when he pupated on a basketball court, breaking the chrysalis of a dysfunctional family, a scrawny body, and blotched skin, and turned into a winged creature unbounded by gravity, the pride of his community.

But I also see the houses where the other poachers lived, the ones who are "really dangerous," the ones who shot the game warden, now retired early. I remember the time Rose, a physician's assistant, asked an old man accompanying a woman and children if he were the grandfather or father of the children.

"Both," he answered.

I remember Debbie, now a nurse, telling me that of the twelve girls who were her close friends in grammar school, eight were sexually abused as children and are now very young mothers.

In short, I see a different world, a world of neighbors, families, friends, and some who are no longer friends. I see them set against a landscape of extraordinary beauty, a history that has shaped the present, and a way of being that is different and precious.

Tremont School

The school became important to me because of my daughter. If I had realized how much I would come to love this school and respect the people in it, I might not have thought it necessary to send our son to boarding school so early. When Michael was in sixth grade in Southwest Harbor, he was in eighth grade classes and was beaten up by the resentful older boys when they could pin him down in the locker room. The school offered no suggestions as to how we could make things better for him. However, the people at Tremont School were able to handle a similar situation very differently.

One day, when she was in seventh grade at Tremont, Elizabeth, then ten years old, came home from school crying. She had gotten a C on her report card - a letter she had never seen before in such a place. She and I sat on the stairs of the house and she cried while I put my arm around her and waited until she could talk. It seemed that other girls in her class were teasing her about being young and she was finding it hard to focus on her work.

I called the school and asked Val, our Principal, what we could do. He suggested we get her teachers together, and so the next day we did. As "Dean of Guidance" running a program in a larger school, I had had many such conferences with parents and teachers, but this was the best one I had ever attended. Each teacher talked about Elizabeth. Each had taken time to know her and to care about her, and each wanted her to succeed. They suggested that we talk with her about puberty and the changes the older girls were going through, since she was ahead of her chronological age intellectually, but not physically. She needed to know that this was not her "fault" and that she must focus on her work and not worry about the teasing - a tough order, but somehow it worked. Elizabeth re-established friendships and began to succeed again, supported by teachers and staff.

When I first moved to Tremont, I tried to serve my new community as a fire person. A faulty valve on an "Indian pack" that made it difficult for me to breathe led me to reassess my talent for that line of work and to think about other ways I could be useful. I had been a teacher and department chairman at a school before moving to Maine and I had contacts with the affluent summer community. So I decided to use these strengths and give $500 to the school while raising more money for things the school could not cover through taxes: field-trips, assemblies, conferences for teachers, a computer, software, instruments for the fledgling orchestra - things other schools could take for granted. Over the next several years, with the help of many people in the school and the year round and summer communities, we did just that. Involvement with The Tremont School Fund gave me a chance to know the school and the people even better and also to learn some tough lessons about imposing ideas rather than weaving them into existing fabric.

Tremont Consolidated Grammar School nestles against the ebb and flow of Bass Harbor Marsh, an estuary that embraces the school in a beautiful and serene setting. The school, opened in 1951, is a one-story building with none of the grace of a traditional Cape and few of the amenities of "modern" schooling. The gym, smaller than regulation, was built in 1974 as part of the Community Center and enlarged in 1984 to house the Town Offices. In this room students practice musical instruments and eat lunch - which, though it may interrupt the town's clerks, does have the advantage of integrating children into the lives of adults when they come to get their dog licenses, fill out requests for septic permits, or pay their taxes.

The school is Spartan - no science lab, a small library, a tiny teachers' "lounge," and classrooms that, though they seem spacious and bright, are not large enough for the growing population of children. Some young families can still afford to buy property in Tremont, even though the rest of the island is too expensive. Also, Tremont is subject to the same demographic pressures as many other parts of the country and has experienced a similar rise in the number of school age children.

The strength of the school is in its people. The Principal, Val Perkins, has been at the school for over twenty-five years, and his father and mother were also teachers in the town. Five other teachers have each been there for over twenty years, and seven of fifteen full-time teachers grew up in the town or on the island. These are people who know each other and the families they serve. For example, because some families are reluctant to come to the school, unimposing as it is, Val walks around the docks and "hangs out," waiting for people to come up to talk about weather and the price of lobster until they edge up on the real reasons they, and he, are there: to talk about their children.

Listening to Val and the other teachers talk about their students is extraordinary - like looking simultaneously through a microscope and a telescope. They see each child in minute detail and they see back through generations to where the child comes from. If these were not remarkably supportive, caring people, such complete knowledge might be oppressive, but I have seen no evidence of that. Instead, children are buoyed by the expectations and compassion of teachers and administrators who can be tough and demanding because they believe these children can do well if they work hard, though they also know the realities that face them.

The Gap

When I came to Mount Desert Island as a year-round resident in 1979, through casual comments and observations made to me by teachers and members of the community I became aware that though most students in Maine, on Mount Desert Island, and in Tremont complete high school, relatively few complete college. As I began to research the causes of this gap, I discovered seemingly contradictory facts I could not understand.

Because my daughter had been a student at Tremont Consolidated Grammar School on Mount Desert Island and I knew the school, I was not so surprised to learn that Tremont students have consistently done well on the Maine Educational Assessments (MEAs), performing far above the level expected by the Maine Department of Education (Charts One and Two). However, I was surprised to find that only 16.8 percent of Tremont residents have any post-secondary education.[2]

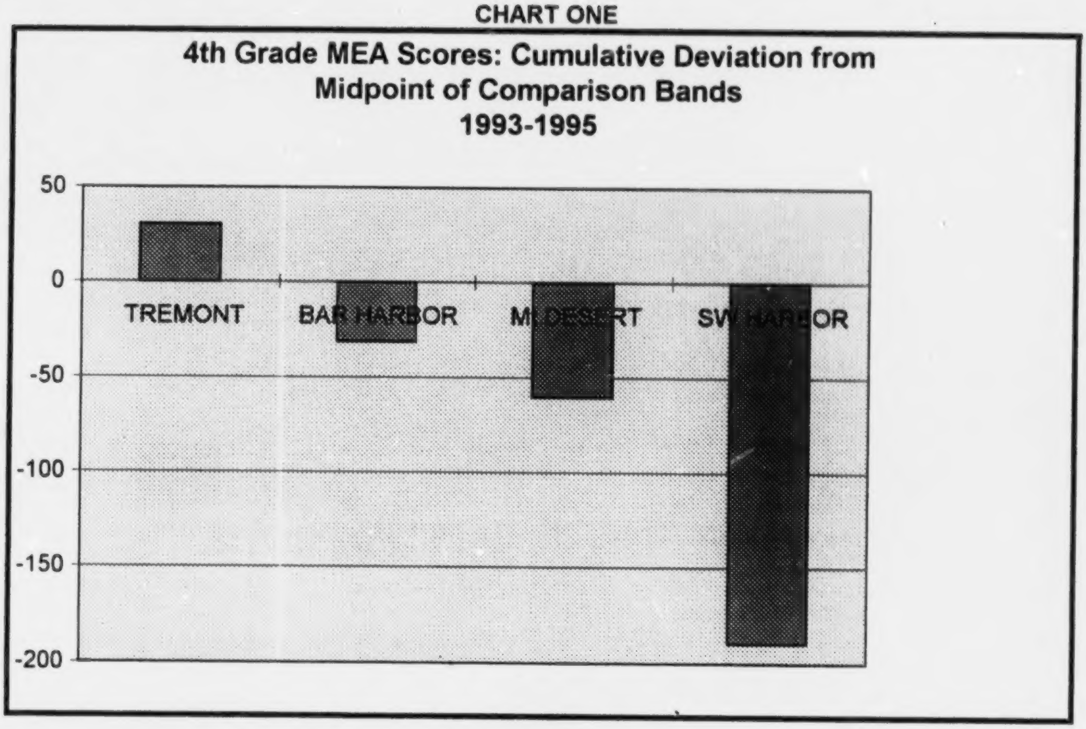
I was also surprised by conflicting attitudes towards education that I found in Tremont. People in Tremont often talked with me about the ways in which they pay for their children's schooling: caring for them at home and paying taxes for education, only to lose them to better jobs out of state, even as Maine imports many highly educated professionals and managers to fill available jobs. Yet for many years residents of Tremont annually voted a higher percentage of the town's budget to support schooling than citizens of other island towns. Although some residents of the other island towns disparage people from Tremont for being "backsiders" on the island, and Tremont has the highest percentage of natives and the lowest per capita income of the four island towns, the Tremont Grammar school is very strong academically.

Though coastal Hancock County, in which Mount Desert Island is located, is one of the more affluent in Maine, it has the highest drop-out rate in the state, an unenviable rank it has had for as long as the Maine Department of Education has gathered such data (Chart Three). Furthermore, students in much less affluent Aroostook County, on the northern border with Canada, have a lower drop-out rate, higher rate of successful completion of high school, and a higher rate at which students go on to college (Chart Four). I had expected that the more affluent coastal communities, such as those on Mount Desert Island, would graduate a higher percentage of students and send more of them on to post-secondary schooling than the rest of the state.

---

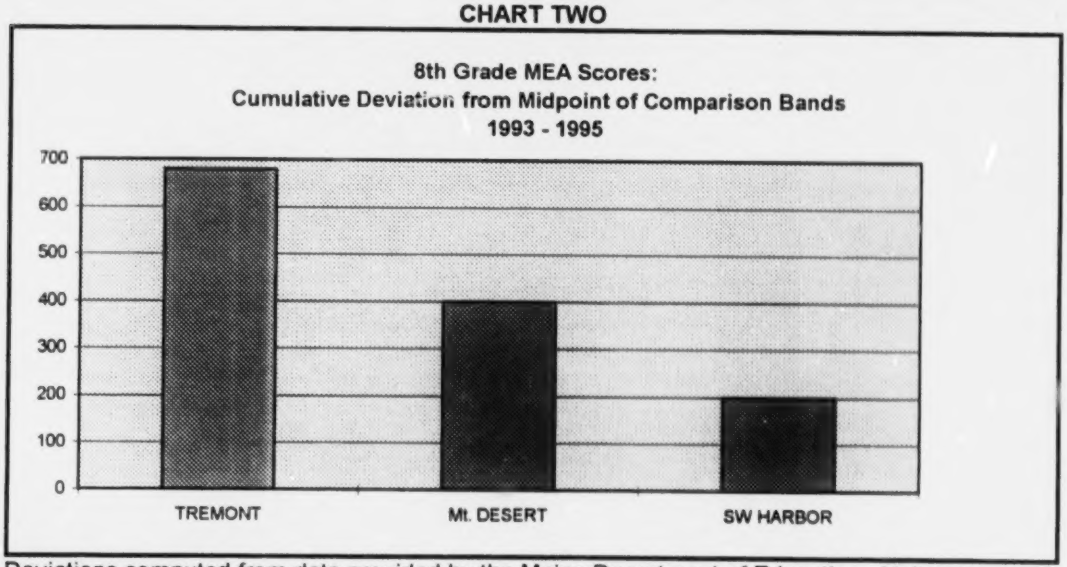
[2] Comparison bands are based on socio-economic status (SES) of the population in a town. Because Tremont has a lower SES than, for example, Mount Desert, the comparison bands for expected performance are lower. However, Tremont is the only one of the four island towns in which students have consistently outperformed the range set by the comparison bands and have even scored higher, in some years and on different segments of the tests, than students from the towns with a higher SES.

CHART ONE



4th Grade MEA Scores: Cumulative Deviation from Midpoint of Comparison Bands 1993-1995

CHART TWO



8th Grade MEA Scores: Cumulative Deviation from Midpoint of Comparison Bands 1993 - 1995

Deviations computed from data provided by the Maine Department of Education. Units are scores on the MEA tests.

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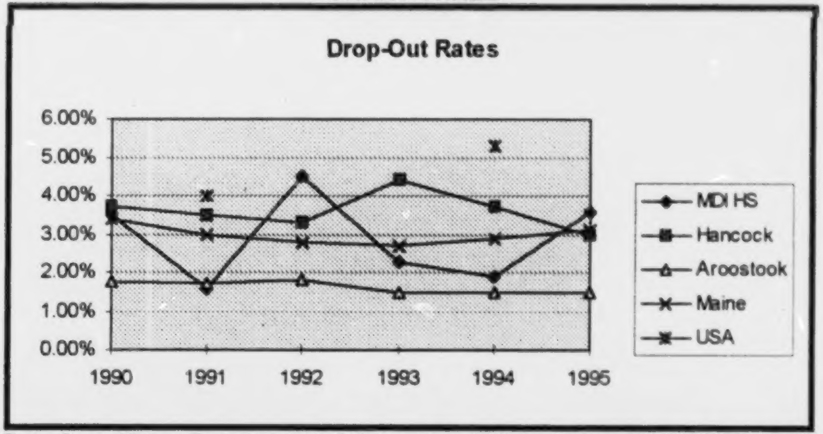
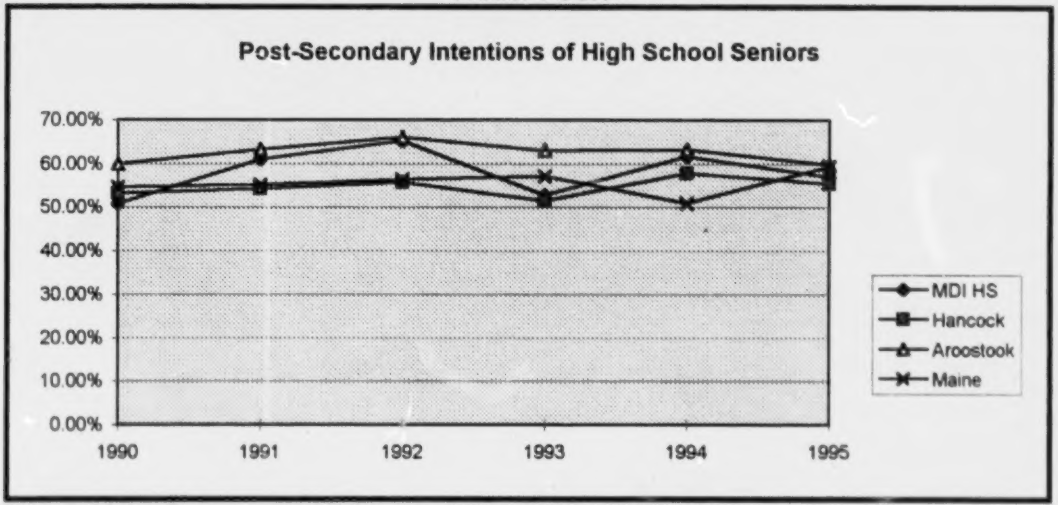
CHART THREE



Data from Maine Department of Education, Office of Truants and Drop-Outs

CHART FOUR



Source: Maine Department of Education, Office of Drop-Outs and Truancy

I was surprised to discover that in 1992, when Maine students first participated in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), the "nation's report card," the state's fourth graders were first in the nation in math and second in reading. In 1994, Maine's fourth graders were first in the nation in reading, but were not given the math test (NAEP, 1993: Figures 1.7,

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2.2,1995: Figure 4.2).[3] But recently a study has shown that Maine high school graduates are 49th in the nation in the rate at which they go on to publicly funded colleges and universities and 44th in terms of private colleges and universities (Halstead, 1995: Table 2.1). I wondered why a population that is number one in the nation in fourth grade ranks near the bottom in the rate at which it goes on to post-secondary schooling, and I began to think that the causes of this gap had to be more complex than the mere lack of money for tuition that other researchers had suggested. These contradictions intrigued and puzzled me, and increased my interest in the effect of culture on aspirations.

The Problem

Students from Tremont do well on the Maine Educational Assessment tests, consistently outperforming The Department of Education's projections based on socio-economic status (Chart One). In fact, students from Tremont often score as well as or better than students from the much more affluent island town of Mount Desert, even though Tremont is the poorest, most traditional community on Mount Desert Island (Table One). However, in 1990 76 percent of Tremont citizens over the age of twenty-five were high school graduates, in comparison with 83 percent of residents of Hancock County, and only 16.8 percent of Tremont's residents held an advanced degree, a figure well below the rate for Hancock County of 21.4 percent (Table Three).[4]

These data highlight the extraordinary value residents of Tremont place on schooling. Note that the ratio of school budget to town budget (Table Two, Line 3) is consistently higher than the percentage of town budget allocated to school expenses in the more affluent towns of Bar Harbor and Mount Desert. Certainly these towns had higher costs for services such as police and

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[3] The fourth grade students did not take the math test in 1994. Maine's eighth graders score almost as well, sharing the top rank with students from six other states.

[4] In Maine, only 33 percent of those who hold an MA or higher are native-born; 67 percent of those who hold such degrees are from out-of-state (Sherwood, correspondence). See Table Twenty.

TABLE ONE
Demographics

POPULATION

Town	Population	Age 0 - 5	Age 5 - 17	%< 18	Over 65	%> 65
Bar Harbor	4443	288	633	20.70%	823	18.50%
Mt. Desert	1899	116	284	19.20%	356	18.70%
SW Harbor	1952	143	317	23.60%	337	17.30%
Tremont	1324	97	207	23%	204	15.40%

PER CAPITA INCOME

Mt. Desert	$16,435
Bar Harbor	$14,234
SW Harbor	$13,334
Tremont	$12,297

FAMILIES BELOW POVERTY

SW Harbor	9.50%
Tremont	6.50%
Bar Harbor	4.20%
Mt. Desert	3.20%

BORN IN MAINE

Tremont	70.70%
Bar Harbor	65.90%
Mt. Desert	64.90%
SW Harbor	62.70%

HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN

Bar Harbor	48%
SW Harbor	46.20%
Tremont	44.90%
Mt. Desert	34.70%

HOME OWNERSHIP	
Tremont	77.10%
Mt. Desert	73.80%
SW Harbor	66.80%
Bar Harbor	61.60%

All data from 1990 census.

TABLE TWO
Education Budgets for Mount Desert Island Towns

	1989-1990	1990-1991	1991-1992	1992-1993	1993-1994	1994-1995	1995-1996	1996-1997
Bar Harbor								
Town Budget	$5,823,580	$6,818,849	$6,887,859	$7,036,171	$7,643,431	$8,117,791	$8,473,730	$8,679,344
School Budget	$1,584,042	$1,828,150	$1,970,726	$2,099,085	$2,510,519	$2,627,974	$2,782,122	$2,844,302
%	27.20%	26.81%	28.61%	29.83%	32.85%	32.37%	32.83%	32.77%
Enrolled 10/1	469	492	519	545	532	518	512	505
$ per student	$ 3,377	$ 3,716	$ 3,797	$ 3,851	$ 4,719	$ 5,073	$5,434	$5,632
Mt. Desert								
Town Budget	$2,973,059	$ 3,419,213	$ 3,632,962	$ 3,671,191	$3,943,694	$ 4,463,086	$4,676,391	$4,938,336
School Budget	$ 871,578	$ 1,004,057	$ 1,070,262	$ 1,076,371	$1,209,246	$ 1,302,236	$1,365,479	$1,514,205
%	29.32%	29.37%	29.46%	29.32%	30.66%	29.18%	29.20%	30.66
Enrolled 10/1	191	216	223	247	246	254	281	274
$ per student	$ 4,563	$ 4,648	$ 4,799	$ 4,358	$ 4,916	$ 5,127	$ 4,856	$ 5,526
SW Harbor								
Town Budget							3,138,445	3,629,720
School Budget	$ 943,355	$ 1,048,828	$ 1,201,959	$ 1,250,338	$1,374,209	$ 1,473,837	$ 1,548,604	$1,615,059
%							49.34%	44.50%
Enrolled 10/1	228	238	232	249	269	281	255	261
$ per student							$ 6,073	$ 6,188
Tremont								
Town Budget	$1,300,355	$ 1,477,058	$ 1,597,660	$ 1,641,884	$1,834,454	$ 1,842,174	$ 1,990,080	$1,764,355
School Budget	$ 542,908	$ 655,636	$ 686,813	$ 711,225	$ 783,722	$ 829,196	$ 914,803	$ 986,861
%	41.75%	44.39%	42.99%	43.32%	42.72%	45.01%	45.97%	55.93%
Enrolled 10/1	141	154	155	158	165	171.00	181	185
$ per student	$ 3,850	$ 4,257	$ 4,431	$ 4,501	$ 4,750	$ 4,849	$ 5,054	$ 5,334
MAINE								
$ per student	$ 3,858	$ 4,171	$ 4,227	$ 4,299	$ 4,411	$ 4,601		

Island data courtesy of the Office of the Superintendent of Schools, Union 98. State data from Maine Department of Education.[5]

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[5] The Maine Department of Education reports that for school year 1994-95 "Per pupil operating costs for individual units range from $2,728.64 to $11,184.82. However, the per-pupil operating costs for slightly more than 54 percent of the school administrative units are within $500 of the state average: from $4,199.92 to $5,100.92" (Maine Department of Education, Internet information, 10/03/96.)

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fire departments, however, Tremont residents could have voted to spend money on non-school related expenses (such as housing for the elderly, etc.). (Figures are not available for Southwest Harbor until 1995 - 97). Note also that the per pupil spending (line 5) in Tremont is higher than in Bar Harbor until 1994-95 and almost equal to the per pupil expense born by the voters of the very wealthy town of Mount Desert which encompasses the villages of Seal Harbor, Northeast Harbor and Somesville.

The gap between completion of high school and a post-secondary degree is a problem statewide. Analysts have noted that "too few Maine young people have the depth of skill and breadth of vision required to take advantage of the changes occurring in the Maine economy," changes that require advanced schooling even to maintain existing occupational and financial levels (Sherwood, 1987:16). This is not a new problem. In 1957, Maine ranked fifteenth among the states in the percentage of its young people completing secondary school, but only thirty-ninth in those finishing four or more years of college (Table Four). Few states had such a gap between the two figures and only 4.8 percent of the citizenry of Maine had completed four or more years of post-secondary education in 1957. At a conference in 1957, "President Charles F. Phillips of Bates College...attributed the wide gap between high-school and college graduates to lack of motivation, alleging that New Hampshire and Vermont, states comparable to Maine in wealth, sent nearly twice as many of their high school graduates to college" (Condon, 1995:544).

In 1990, Maine ranked eighteenth among the states in the percentage of its students completing high school and twenty-seventh in the number completing college. The gap had narrowed, but unfortunately these percentages do not distinguish between young people who are from families that had recently migrated to the state and those who are native-born (Condon, interview: August 13, 1996).[6]

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[6] If "all things were equal," the rate at which Maine high school students go on to college should be proportionate to the rate at which they graduate from high school, and one would expect that students who fared so well on the NAEPs would graduate from high school at a high rate.

TABLE THREE
Percentage of Graduates in the Population (1990)

High school Graduates:

Tremont: 76% Hancock: 83% Maine: 78.8% USA: 83%

College Graduates:

Tremont: 16.8% Hancock: 21.4% Maine: 18.8% USA: 23% [7]

Note the lower percentage of college graduates in Tremont in relation to the percentage of students who graduate from high school.

TABLE FOUR
Maine's Rank Nationally

	1957	1990
% of young people completing HS	15th	18th
% finishing 4 years of college	39th	27th[8]

(Condon, 1995 and discussion, 1996).

1995:

49th in ratio of students in public post-secondary institutions to high school graduates.

44th in percentage of recent high school graduates starting college anywhere.[9]

(Halstead, 1996).

The gap between the success of Maine students while they are in elementary school and the low rate at which they go on to post-secondary schooling has implications for students that are financial and personal, which can be seen easily on Mount Desert Island. As employers demand higher levels of education in employees, and as the price of housing on Mount Desert Island increases, people without advanced degrees cannot afford to live on the island. The costs of living on the island are escalating under pressure from migrants, many of whom come with advanced degrees to take professional and managerial jobs. Less educated, native-born people from Tremont are finding it increasingly difficult to compete for jobs and to continue to live on Mount Desert Island, a trend which mirrors the erosion nationally of wages for younger workers who do not have a college degree.

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[7] Data courtesy of Vance Grant, Office of Educational Statistics, Current Population Survey, Educational Attainment in The US, March 1995, Series P20#489.

[8] Condon, 1995:544 and private discussion, 1996.

[9] Halstead, 1996, see also Table 15.

> The real wages of the bottom 80 percent of the workforce have fallen by 1.9 percent over the last ten years. This drop in real wages has not been caused or counter-balanced by a growth in fringe benefits such a pension and health insurance. Between 1980 and 1989 the real value of hourly fringe benefits grew by 13.8 percent, even faster than the 9.3 percent fall in hourly wages.
>
> These declines have been more devastating to the economic situation of families headed by younger workers (ages 25 - 34), and particularly to the three-quarters of the workforce who do not possess college degrees. In 1988 a family headed by a young worker had an income $1,542 less than its counterpart did nine years earlier in 1979 (a drop of 4.8 percent). A young family headed by a high school graduate in 1987 had an income of $2,191 (or 7.3 percent) less than its counterpart in 1979. [Weis, 1996:449]

We cannot easily explain the gap between completion of high school and post-secondary schooling. As noted, Tremont students do very well on the MEAs; therefore, it seems they are academically qualified to go on to further schooling. Limited financial ability may play a part in a young person's decision not to pursue an advanced degree, but anecdotal evidence suggests that some young people turn down scholarships, while others do not take advantage of generous loan programs. I think we must look at the way the culture and history of the people of Tremont define aspirations for an understanding of this gap.

Importance of this Study

It is important to study the influence of culture on aspirations at this particular moment in our history. As the formal barriers to equal opportunity have been steadily removed over the past forty years, there has been a growing interest among social scientists and policy-makers in the role of informal barriers to opportunities. Cultural norms that define as appropriate aspirations limited to traditional ways of earning a living may be barriers to further education. Traits and behavior promoted by a culture may, unintentionally, curtail a student's success throughout school. However, in a small community these informal barriers may provide nurturing that students from less tightly-knit societies rarely enjoy.

Many researchers have studied students to understand why some reject styles of teaching and learning. For example, Ogbu and others have suggested that black youth fail to take advantage of the opportunities available to them in school because they feel alienated by "white man's" education (Ogbu, 1978; Wolcott, 1987; Eckert, 1989; Page, 1991; Deyhle, 1995). John Lofty has shown us that students on Deer Isle, Maine reject academic learning and become highly motivated and skilled operators of sophisticated and expensive machinery when they leave school to work on lobster boats (Lofty, 1994). But in the process they turn away from learning other skills that might help them navigate a system built on academic achievement. It may be that students in Tremont turn away from post-secondary education because they are caught in a similar dynamic.

It is my hope that this study will contribute both to our understanding of aspirations and to strategies for helping students. By looking at ways in which rural students in Tremont define their aspirations and attempt to achieve them, I hope to understand better the importance of culture and cultural context as students make meaning of their lives and plan for their futures.

CHAPTER ONE

RESEARCH METHODS

"Nobody who followed the scientific method ever discovered anything interesting"

Wolcott, 1990:32[10]

Overview

This study presents a holistic picture (or narrative) of Tremont, Maine, showing how its culture influences decisions students make about post-secondary education. To answer the research question of what the influence of culture is on aspirations, I have gathered data from a wide range of people, historical records, census figures, and other sources. In answering my question, I tell the story of a small town in Maine whose people have lived through significant change in the past fifty years.

Researcher's Relation to the Setting

I first visited Mount Desert Island in 1948 as a summer child and moved there in 1979 as a "year-round summer person." Since earning a BA in anthropology in 1965 and an MA in sociology in 1969, I have used the perspectives of these disciplines to understand the interaction of local people with those "from away." I am always going to be an outsider, a person "from away," but through my work in the schools, and in real estate and construction, I have gained some knowledge of local concerns and have found acceptance in both the year-round and summer communities. Because of my personal situation growing up, and as a product of the Sixties, I am biased against people who are privileged and must keep this in mind so I do not prejudice the research.

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[10] Attributed to Paul Weiss and originally quoted in Keesing and Keesing, 1971: 1[illegible].

Limitations of the study

The study is limited by time, money, and the fact that I am a single researcher. It is limited by focusing on students from one small town in rural Maine. It is further limited by the nature of the method of inquiry, which requires intense observation of single cases. The most serious limitation to the study is, however, my own inexperience in qualitative and quantitative research, my bias, as described above, and my familiarity with the culture, all of which may cloud my observations.

Purpose of the study

1. The problem is that although students from Tremont, Maine do well on the Maine Educational Assessment tests, and graduate from high school in relatively high numbers, they do not go on to post-secondary education in equivalent numbers.

2. The research question: What is the influence of culture on aspirations of students in Tremont, Maine?

3. The purpose of this study is to examine the factors that influence decisions students from Tremont, Maine make about post-secondary schooling. It is important to understand this process because it is increasingly difficult for people without post-secondary education to compete economically with people "from away," who tend to be more affluent and better educated. Cost of living, particularly the increased cost of housing, is forcing many less well-educated islanders off their island.[11] The study may help us to understand, on a larger scale, why Maine students in general go on to post-secondary schooling at a very low rate in comparison with students nationally.

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[11] Though Tremont has the highest percentage of people who are native-born, and the highest percentage of people who own their own houses, Town Assessors and local realtors acknowledge that ownership of real property increasingly mimics the other island towns where people "from away" now own much of the most valuable real estate (see Table Nine).

Rationale for Ethnographic Case Study

I have done an ethnographic case study using qualitative and quantitative research methods. The open-ended ethnographic method allowed me to research influences on aspirations and motivations in a broad and yet deep way. I developed a holistic view of a culture and society through interviews with experts in schooling, students, and other residents of Tremont. I also met with focus groups of parents, teachers, and community members and took life histories from community members of different ages. I related these findings to the history and culture of the area. This method helped me address my research question by giving students an opportunity to speak for themselves, as well as by situating their responses within the culture and history of the community (Merriam, 1988; Wolcott, 1995; Van Maanen,1995). I triangulated my data through the ninety-eight question survey developed by the National Center for Student Aspirations.

Sharan Merriam writes that "the qualitative case study can be defined as an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single entity, phenomenon, or social unit. Case studies are particularistic, descriptive, heuristic, and rely heavily on inductive reasoning in handling multiple data sources" (Merriam, 1988:16). She adds that "an ethnographic case study...is more than an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a social unit or phenomenon. It is a sociocultural analysis of the unit of study" due to its "concern with the cultural context" (Merriam, 1988:23).

Mine is an ethnographic case study because it describes a small town in a resort community of rural Maine using data from multiple sources and relies on induction, moving from the particular to the general. It is heuristic because I have been reflecting on my impressions of this island since I was a child, though my methods may recently have become more sophisticated. This is a "socio-cultural analysis" because I think culture plays an important part in channeling aspirations and that the cultural context helps people make meaning of their lives.

I have four reasons for attempting an ethnographic case study of students in Tremont, Maine, in order to understand how they form their aspirations. The first is that too often studies of learning have focused entirely on what happens between the teacher and the learner. As Wolcott suggests:

> [T]he emphasis in most school ethnographies is almost entirely on classroom life. There is much that researchers do not know about the lives of those they study....'Anthropology and education' seems to have focused unduly on schools and given too little attention to education in broader cultural context. [Wolcott, 1987: 44]

I hope to learn how students make decisions about schooling and aspirations in that "broader cultural context."

The second is that I hope the qualitative nature of my data complements the work of The National Center for Student Aspirations (NCSA), which focuses on in-school practice primarily through quantitative analysis. I have studied the context or culture in which students live and the ways it influences their decisions about post-secondary education. This perspective is justified by Wolcott's suggestion: "In our call for more anthropological attention to learning, I think attention should be focused on learning that occurs in natural settings rather than on learning done in schools..." (Wolcott 1987:44).

Third, I believe that by collecting data from older members of the community, and by describing the culture, I add to our understanding of the ways that cultures change over time and that transmission of culture from one generation to another is affected by that change. I think that life histories are an appropriate way to illuminate these changes for the same reasons Robert Redfield has suggested:

> it seems to me that the biographic form of description provides a direct entry into problems of social change. The respects in which a community is not one stable and self-consistent structure, but is changing from some manner of life to another, appear most plainly in the changing states of mind of people, or in the differences between what older people think and feel and what younger people think and feel. We might therefore attempt a comparison of the careers of older people and of younger. This could be done by obtaining the life stories of representatives of each generation. [Redfield, 1960a:60]

Life histories, aided by focus groups and interviews with experts in education on issues related to coastal Maine, particularly Hancock County, paint a portrait of Tremont as it moves from the memories of its older residents to the present.

Fourth, ethnography is appropriate because I want to understand how the culture in which students live influences their choices about what they do after high school. Ethnography requires that I describe the cultural context in detail sufficient to allow the reader to see, as I have, the elements that have helped shape reality for these students and guided them as they made meaning of their lives. Ethnography is the appropriate method for this undertaking because "the underlying rationale for doing ethnography is understood to be cultural interpretation...how culture influences without controlling" (Wolcott, 1995:83). These reasons for choosing the ethnographic case study will guide my research.

Self-Awareness of the Ethnographer

In qualitative research the ethnographer is the primary instrument of investigation. Though for years the social sciences have tried to cloak dependence on the "social relations skills of the researcher" (Ball, 1990:165) with artifices like the use of the third person and the passive voice, the reality is that the trained researcher, acknowledging her or his own culture, limitations, and strengths, may be as capable of "scientific method" as the quantitative researcher wielding surveys based on easily manipulated inputs. Just because an interpretation is rendered in numbers does not mean it is correct. As in qualitative studies, the data may be based on answers to questions that have been poorly framed, confusing, irrelevant, or even unasked. The unasked question might have been essential.

Ethnography acknowledges that the investigator chooses elements upon which to base interpretation and is, therefore, the key research tool. As stated in the 1960s by Charles Frake, the task of description is not to "recount the events of a society but to specify what one must know to make those events maximally probable" (Wolcott, 1995:84). The challenge is not to lay out everything in the order in which it happened, but to find patterns and support interpretation with specific data so that we can anticipate, within an acceptable range, how someone in a similar circumstance might react.

Not only is self-awareness imperative in the interpretation of data, it is also critical in the gathering of data. Differences in gender, age, and "world view" may prejudice the way informants respond and narrow the aperture through which they allow the researcher to peer into their world. However, I wonder if the researcher can be all things to all people, or can neutralize his or her own personality to disarm informants and learn from everyone with equal effectiveness. Perhaps we can only celebrate our differences, look for our commonalities, and acknowledge that we, as individual researchers, see others through our own distorting lens. As Ball asks, "If someone else did the fieldwork, would the ethnography have turned out differently? The answer to that must be 'yes.' But it is a qualified yes. I believe that the differences between my analysis and yours typically would be small rather than large" (Ball, 1990:167).

My own entrée to my community of fieldwork was predicated in large part on the fact that I have gotten to know (and be known in) this community over many years. Though I too can put on a cloak of scientific neutrality, I still wear the costumes of mother, business owner, friend, volunteer, and person "from away," as well as many others, some of which are negative, and some of which I am unaware. If I were not known to this community, I would not enjoy the access I have. But I can not cast off my multiple identities, nor would I try.

Power of the Ethnographer

We think too little about the power an ethnographer has in collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data. Again, certain artifices have developed to shield us from this power. Scientists write in the third person passive voice about communities that don't exist and about people without names because they are 'innocent' and we must 'protect' them. But then as readers we try to figure out where Doc and his Norton boys stood on the "Street Corner," or where Plainville really is. Perhaps it would be more honest to identify informants and their community, thus stripping the protective screen away from the ethnographer.

Power also may color questions and answers. If I were a teacher asking my students the questions I asked my informants, surely the fact that I could punish with a poor grade would distort their answers. In the role of ethnographer I have no such overt power, but I do represent a class and category of people - summer people - who are perceived as powerful, and to whom only the expected answers are given. I hope that because I have lived in this community for a long time I have both asked the questions and received the answers in a way that minimizes this distortion.

Reflexivity

Ball defines reflexivity as "the conscious and deliberate linking of the social process of engagement in the field with the technical processes of data collection and the decisions that that linking involves." He thinks that "this kind of self-conscious engagement with the world is what defines the process of ethnography," the same process, as he notes, that George Herbert Mead called the "internal conversation" (Ball, 1990:159). Ball suggests that reflexivity emphasizes "the social skills and creative intelligence of the fieldworker...in contrast to technical competence" (Ball, 1990:157).

Reflexivity presupposes that the researcher is aware of his or her role, the effect of his or her presence in the field, and of his or her ability, even requirement, to make choices. Therefore, the researcher in ethnography must select what is noticed, described, analyzed, and interpreted as evidence to support his or her theories and policy recommendations.

Geertz describes reflexivity as an " 'I - witnessing approach to the construction of cultural descriptions" (Geertz, 1988:78) bringing together "fieldwork as personal encounter and ethnography as reliable account" (1988:84). Jacobsen, however, notes that "a serious limitation of reflexive ethnography...is that it confuses the process of discovery with that of verification" (Jacobsen, 1991:116 -117).

Form

I care about words and writing, and I hope this threads through my paper, sewing it together with strands of color and texture. Several ethnographers, notably Geertz, Wolcott, Jacobsen, and Van Maanen write about the writing of ethnography. They suggest that the writer use the first person because "to write the researcher out of the report is to deny the dependency of the data on the researcher's presence" (Wolcott, 1990:28; Ball, 1990:170). I use the first person because I do not want to shield myself behind false barriers in order to feign distance and disinterest. I use the active voice because I believe that in writing this narrative I am engaged "passionately" and actively and must take responsibility for that engagement.[12]

The form and presentation of this study matter to me and I have tried to follow not only my own sensibilities, but the wisdom of other writers I admire. I agree with Wolcott's assertion that:

> Narrative links sociology to literature and to history...narrative is the best way to understand the human experience because it is the way humans understand their lives. It is the closest to the human experience and hence the least falsifying of that experience....If we wish to understand the deepest and most universal of human experiences, if we wish our work to be faithful to the lived experiences of people, if we wish for a union between poetics and science, or if we wish to use our privileges and skills to empower the people we study, then we *should* value the narrative. [Wolcott, 1995:218]

Narrative is, of course, only suitable for telling part of the story; I have also tried to follow Wolcott's advice not to let the hand of analysis become too heavy (Wolcott, 1990:28).

Van Maanen describes a subgenre of ethnography he calls "impressionist tales" (Van Maanen, 1988:106). I find his distinction useful justification for inclusion of a form of writing not usually found in a paper of this sort: the short story. My stories are based on incidents I witnessed and in which I participated. However, because in many cases I gathered these data before I knew I was looking for data, they are only impressions, though gleaned from thousands of impressions over more than fifty years. I include them as sketches of the four island towns (Tremont,

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[12] This reflects my agreement with Jules Henry who acknowledged he was writing "passionate" ethnography.

Southwest Harbor, Northeast Harbor, and Bar Harbor), and as composite portraits of people in Tremont, a weft over which to weave the text. Quoting James Clifford, Van Maanen adds that "to recognize the poetic dimension of ethnography does not require one gives up facts and accurate accounting for the supposed freeplay of poetry. Poetry is not limited to romantic or modernist subjectivism; it can be historical, precise, objective" (Van Maanen, 1988:101). Though I dare not call these sketches poetic, I hope they will add to the context of my story.

Analysis: Through Thick and Thin

Geertz' distinction between "thick" and "thin" descriptions is quoted relentlessly because it is important. Jacobsen reminds us, "Thin description depicts behaviors in the sense of physical motions, as seen, for example, by the eye of a camera; in contrast, thick description reveals its significance" (Jacobsen, 1991:7). Geertz notes Ryle's distinction between the involuntary twitching of an eye, the interpretations of winks, and even "winks upon winks upon winks" (Geertz, 1973:9). I have attempted, in this ethnography, to understand all the winks while remembering that Geertz intended this distinction to champion greater precision and detail in ethnographic description, not to suggest greater length.[13]

In looking for the meaning behind these 'winks,' I have, in Fortes's words, broken up "the empirical sequence and concomitance of custom and social relations and group[ed them]...in categories of general import" (Fortes, 1970: 132, Jacobsen, 1991:7). In this way I move the data from a recounting of observation to the level of analysis and interpretation. I hope that other trained observers would have noted the same types of events over time, leading them to the same observations and interpretations, but I cannot be sure.

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[13] Geertz attributes the original discussion of "thick description" and the example of a wink to Gilbert Ryle, (Geertz, 1973:6).

Ethnography as Argument

Ethnographies do have points of view, and mine is no different. I believe that culture, everything passed on through learning, has a powerful impact on education, and that "the educational system of a community constitutes an important vehicle for the transmission of culture" (Warren,1987:120). This interaction is a process, one that produces change, which in turn influences action and reaction.

In a rural West German village Warren studied and wrote about (as in Tremont):

> the schools are confronted with a perplexing dilemma. The present form and content of education constitute a symbol of cultural stability and continuity, but as a positive force effecting constructive adjustment to change, they are less functional. To sustain a functionally effective role in the community the schools must adjust to the demands of cultural change but at a pace and in a way that will not jeopardize their contribution to cultural maintenance. [Warren,1987:121]

My province then, is culture and history, and the processes of action, reaction and interaction between the people who influence students as communities and schools try to adapt to change.

My job is to describe and analyze the influences that play a role in the decisions students from Tremont make about post-secondary schooling. Surely these include the community, the schools, the families, the culture of Maine (in particular the circumstances of coastal areas and Mount Desert Island) and the larger national and international culture brought to the island by the media and in the persons of over two million visitors and summer residents each year.

There are two major styles of ethnography: "structural and cultural (or symbolic) studies [deal] with modes of thought, and functional, processual, and logistical (or praxis) ethnographies deal with modes of action" (Jacobsen, 1991:23). These two modes overlap, and one could devise a continuum on which to fit anthropologists writing in variations of these modes. For example, Robert Redfield, while closely allied with his mentor Raymond Firth in delineating the importance of social structure, also sees the importance of process and change. As he began to describe peasant communities instead of primitive societies relatively untouched by civilization, Redfield shifted the concept of a "social structure" to an "ecological system" in which the parts inter-relate, *adapting to an environment* both physical and psychological.

Fredrik Barth departed further from the path of structural anthropology to follow "process," even while acknowledging the importance of structure. In studying process, Barth describes cultures in organizational terms, but also asks how people within the culture make decisions. He looks at the constraints that limit choices and at the norms and values that encourage other decisions.

Barth argues that "local variation in a traditional civilization is not a surface disturbance, to be covered over by generalization or tidied away by a typology. It is a ubiquitous feature of great civilizations, and we should make it a major component of our description and characterization of these societies rather than a difficulty to be overcome" (Barth, 1993:3). He suggests a method for accomplishing this:

> First, we must break loose from our root metaphor of society as a system of articulated parts. The image is too simple, and it misleads: we must look for another model....I hold that when we can see society as characterized by a degree of conceptual and statistical order, this must reflect the results of processes - processes that arise from particular combinations of ideas, material circumstance, and interactional potentials and have patterning as their consequences. The image of processes serves us better than that of a structure or a closed system....After all, we generally recognize by now that we are speaking of a reality that is at least in significant part socially and cultural constructed....Our focus should be on the processes of social and cultural construction of reality, which are always here and now. [Barth, 1993:3]

I find these ideas compelling and appropriate for a study of decision-making based on aspirations in a small township in rural Maine. Not only is Tremont a particular variant of Maine culture, but it is the processes of decision-making that are key to understanding how to create programs and policies that may effect change.

Setting: Population

The population for the qualitative portion of the study is residents of the Town of Tremont who are both in and out of school. The population for the quantitative portion of the study is students between grades three and eight who attend Tremont School, as well as current students at the Mount Desert Island High School who are from Tremont, most of whom are ninth graders. There are approximately two hundred people in this cumulative population of students from Tremont and approximately 1124 other residents of Tremont who are no longer in school, though not all of these attended Tremont Consolidated Grammar School or Mount Desert Island High School.

Sample

One hundred nine of the one hundred twenty students at Tremont Consolidated Grammar School who are in grades three through eight completed the survey. However, only twenty-seven of the approximately eighty Tremont students at Mount Desert Island High School completed the survey. As thirteen of these students were in the ninth grade alone, I decided to use only those responses. To compensate for the disappointing return of surveys by other Tremont students who attended the high school, I held a focus group with fifteen of these students, most of whom again were in ninth grade.

TABLE FIVE
Data Collection

	Students			**Community**	**Teachers**	**Experts**
	Primary	2ndary	College	Older Middle Younger		
Focus Group		15		5 from middle group	16	
Interview*		2	2	6 5 6		15
Survey	109	27				

Totals

Focus Group	37
Interview*	36
Survey	136

* This number includes only formal interviews, not the hundreds of less formal discussions I have had over the years, no matter how intensive, nor does it include repeated interviews or focus group meetings with the same person.

Subjects

I interviewed twenty-one residents of Tremont, Maine, ranging in age from very recent graduates to people who are in their eighties. I tried for a balance of men and women, to interview informants who dropped out or completed high school, and to interview others who attended college, junior college or vocational school. I included a small sampling of people who have moved to the area.

Recruitment

Because I had lived in this community for many years I already knew people who were excellent sources of data about Tremont. I created a pool of possible informants suggested by Principal Val Perkins, as well as by other people in the community I trust and whose opinions I value.

Fieldwork Procedures

I met with members of the community in the evening in a classroom at Tremont Consolidated Grammar School. I met in the same classroom three times with teachers from the school in the morning before school began. I usually met with informants at their homes; however, I met with three people in the public library and with four at an office, as this was their preference. I interviewed most informants individually, but in a few cases participants wished to meet as a small family group. I met with the experts in education in their offices. I had sent each of them a list of questions to consider before we met and had interviewed them over the phone several times beforehand as well.

With the help of teachers at the two schools, I administered the Aspirations Survey to 109 of 120 students at Tremont Consolidated Grammar School and to thirteen of seventeen Tremont ninth graders at the Mount Desert Island Regional High school, as described above, as well as to fourteen other students from Tremont attending Mount Desert *Island* High *School* .[14]

Collection of Data

I met three times in a focus group with the teachers at Tremont School, and separately with five parents from Tremont to learn what they think influences students in making decisions about post-secondary schooling. I interviewed twenty-one residents of Tremont, ranging in age from twenty-two to approximately eighty, to learn more about them and their peers and about the changes they have observed in Tremont. Using open-ended questions, I took life histories from people and asked for their opinions about the gap between the rate at which Maine students go on to post-secondary schooling and their success on the NAEPs. In addition, I held a focus group with students from Tremont who are currently attending Mount Desert Island High School and interviewed two such students in depth.

I interviewed several experts who work in the school system, town government, and state department of education. In this study, I relied heavily on the Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Howard Colter, and the Principal of Tremont School, Val Perkins, who have helped me tremendously over the past several years.

Names

I have changed the names of people with whom I spoke, or about whom informants spoke. In some cases I have used more than one name for the same person to help shield his or her identity. I have used the correct name for people who gave me permission to do so. I have used place names because it seemed impossible to disguise them and yet establish the context that creates the particular culture and history of Tremont School. I use the letter B. to indicate when I was the speaker.

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[14] Please see the Appendix for a complete discussion of the survey.

Definition of Key Concepts for the Purposes of this Study

- Culture: culture is the body of knowledge passed on through learning (in contrast to behavior that is genetically transmitted).
- The "Primary Group," as defined by Edward Shils, is "a group characterized by a high degree of solidarity, informality in the code of rules which regulate the behavior of its members, and autonomy in the creation of these rules. The solidarity involves a close identification of the members with one another and with any symbols of the group which might have grown up" (Shils, 1951: 44). Most people will interact with several primary groups in a lifetime, though none will include exactly the same people, even in a very small society.
- Aspiration: "a strong desire for realization (as of ambitions, ideals, or accomplishments)" (Gove, 1986:130) or "any goal an individual is willing to invest in beforehand" (from Lewin, Sherwood, 1989:62).
- Tremont: is one of four townships on Mount Desert Island, Maine.[15]
- Downeast: refers to coastal Maine and the Maritimes and comes from the fact that windjammers from Boston sailed 'down-wind' to Maine on the prevailing westerly winds.
- "From away": people who were not born in the State of Maine and whose grandparents or parents were not born in the state are known as people "from away." This term includes summer residents, year-round residents who have moved to the island, and tourists.
- Natives: for the purposes of this study, people who were born in the state of Maine, or whose parents or grandparents were born within the state, are natives.
- Summer people: residents from out-of-state who own property on the island which they use only for vacations. Some summer residents move to the island year-round (often to retire) and become "year-round summer people."
- Tourists: people from out-of-state who are visiting for a short period of time.

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[15] The other towns are: Bar Harbor, the largest and most commercial; Mount Desert, the most affluent; and Southwest Harbor, also on the western side of the island, which is increasingly successful commercially and in attracting many summer visitors and summer residents.

- Students: for the purposes of this study, students are defined as residents of Tremont who either attend Tremont Grammar School or the Mount Desert Island High School.
- Major influences: to influence means "to affect or alter the conduct, thought, or character of by indirect or intangible means" (Gove, 1986:1160). For the purposes of this study, the term "major influences" describes factors that affected or altered the conduct of students in Tremont in making decisions about post-secondary education.
- Post-secondary: the period after high school. For the purposes of this study, post-secondary refers to what students do after leaving or graduating from Mount Desert Island High School.
- Education: "the act or process of providing with knowledge, skill, competence, or usu. desirable qualities of behavior or character or being so provided especially by a formal course of study, instruction or training" (Gove,1986:723). Schooling: for the purposes of this study this includes formal schooling in college, junior college or vocational school. When used generally, of course, the term may include primary and secondary schooling.

Hypotheses

- Disparity in attainment is based at least in part on differing aspirations.
- The "primary group" plays an important role in defining a student's aspirations, as does the culture of his or her community.
- The culture of traditional Maine, as seen in Tremont, promotes certain types and levels of attainment and aspiration.
- The "quality of life" students from Tremont value helps define their aspirations.
- There is tension within the community between the *gemeinschaft* culture of traditional Maine people and the *gesellschaft* values of people "from away."
- Some vulnerable adolescents need community and family support when making the transition to high school; however, as their need intensifies, family and community support wanes. Such students, nurtured by the caring atmosphere of Tremont Consolidated Grammar School, may not

have developed sufficient coping skills and may get "lost" in the consolidated island-wide high school.

CHAPTER TWO

Development of the Self and Aspirations

Why do some students in Tremont underachieve in relation to the promise they show in elementary school? Why do so few continue their education after high school? In this chapter, I trace some concepts and constructs pertinent to the development of aspirations and the self, considering how they might apply to rural children, and in particular to students in Tremont, Maine. The most important concept for our discussion is that individual and collective memory projects onto the future by shaping ways in which we define specific goals as appropriate. Csikszentmihalyi states:

> If one takes evolution seriously...one appreciates how important the past is in shaping the present and the future. Just as the chemical structure of the human chromosome began to determine, millions of years ago, both the truth and the illusions that we are destined to experience, so, too, do the symbolic representations created by past thinkers help to reveal as well as to conceal reality. [Csikszentmihalyi, 1994:56]

Or as Mead puts it: "What we see in the external world is partly due to our filling in....Experience calls out the content" (Mead, 1982:106,132).

Within the culture of origin we find factors that define the aspirations an individual learns to consider worth attaining. An individual may grow away from those definitions, or may change goals and redefine appropriate means to attain them, but not without effort, since they are deeply imbedded within the concept of self.

The Development of Aspirations:

In the 1930's Kurt Lewin defined aspirations as a "person's expectations, goals, or claims on his future achievement" (Quaglia, et al. 1991:1) and as "any goal an individual is willing to invest in beforehand" (Sherwood, 1989:61, 62). Lewin added: "We speak of *aspiration* in regard to an action if the result of this action is seen as an achievement reflecting one's own ability; if, in addition, different degrees of difficulty can be distinguished, we speak of a *level of aspiration*" (Lewin, 1951:285).

Researchers Quaglia, McIntire and Townsend at the College of Education at the University of Maine, Orono, have defined aspirations as "an individual's desire to achieve a goal coupled with the necessary commitment in the present that will foster the attainment of a desired outcome" (Quaglia, et al., 1991:3). Richard Sherwood, an experienced Policy Analyst at The Maine State Planning Office, adds that "aspirations have two distinctive aspects. First they are future oriented....Secondly, aspirations are motivators. They are goals individuals are willing to invest time, effort or money in to attain" (Sherwood, 1989:61).

Researchers at the National Center for Student Aspirations (NCSA) focus on interaction between students and schools while acknowledging that family and community play a key role in creating aspirations. They distinguish three components of aspiration: inspiration, ambition, and "separation," or the degree to which students are alienated from an activity or aspiration (Quaglia, et al., 1991:8). Researchers at the Center have introduced "a new way of conceptualizing aspirations:"

> Aspirations can be defined *as a student's ability to identify and set goals for the future, while being inspired in the present to work toward those goals*. This construct of aspirations has two major underpinnings *inspiration* and *ambitions*. Inspiration reflects that an activity is exciting and enjoyable to the individual and the awareness of being fully and richly involved in life here and now. It is depicted by an individual who becomes involved in an activity for its intrinsic value and enjoyment. An individual with a high level of inspiration is one who believes an activity is useful and enjoyable. Ambitions represent the perception that an activity is important as a means to future goals. It reflects individuals' perceptions that it is both possible and desirable to think in future terms and to plan for the future. [emphasis in the original]
>
> This way of viewing student aspirations is unique in that it combines the motivational components of the present (inspiration) with the future (ambitions). Individuals' perceptions may reflect only one of the dimensions, however. For example, some students may be thoroughly engaged in activities in the present, but have no future goals nor see their value. In contrast, other students may set long term goals yet do little or nothing in the present to accomplish those future goals. Ideally -- and by our definition -- an individual with aspirations must exhibit behavioral traits reflective of both ambitions and inspiration. That is, they must have the ability to identify and set goals for the future while being motivated in the present to progress toward those goals. [Quaglia and Cobb, 1996:130]

Researchers at NCSA see aspirations, then, as "the behavioral manifestation of *ambitions* and *inspiration* working together" (Quaglia, draft:2) However, this definition almost ignores the cultural component of aspirations and the importance of the past in laying the groundwork for inspiration and in defining ambitions.

Students understand their present and forecast their future through experience formed by interacting with their culture (through family, community, school, friends, and the larger society). Because of this, we must understand the forces in their familial, societal, and cultural memories that help students interpret both the past and the present and underlie their thinking about what is possible in the future.[16] Memory does, indeed, project forwards. Therefore, I would add the dimension of the "Past" to the concept that aspirations are based on inspiration and ambition.

FIGURE ONE
Understanding the Future through the Past

Aspirations equals:

The National Center for Student Aspirations:
"The behavioral manifestation of *ambitions* and *inspiration* working together."

	Present	Future
	Inspiration	Ambition

As amended:

"The behavioral manifestation of ambitions and inspiration working together," focused through the lens of culture and history.

Past	Present	Future
Memory (collective and individual)	Inspiration	Ambition

Preconditions for High Aspirations

Quaglia et al. contend that without aspirations and goals, school is little more than a "pattern of repetition, rhetoric and resignation." The "glue that holds the educational process together - is students' aspirations" (Quaglia and Cobb, 1996:1). Aspirations can be seen as the *sine qua non* in education. If students do not aspire to a future that connects to their past and present, through family, community and school, it seems likely that they will be in school only to fulfill a legal obligation and enjoy the company of peers, and that the school will be a hostile environment for them.

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[16] Lewin noted the importance of the "psychological" past in his discussion of "field theory" (Lewin, 1951: 27, 53).

The third component, "separation," suggests the degree to which students are alienated from an activity or aspiration. Students who experience separation may have high ambitions and low inspiration, or the reverse, but in either case they have little idea why they are involved in activities and "little inherent sense of purpose" or involvement with school beyond what is required. As we will see, Tremont parents and teachers think that inclusion in extra-curricular activities is an essential ingredient in the success of students at Tremont School and that the separation many students go through in high school has to with their relative lack of participation in such activities.

With the help of visiting scholars Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi and Theodore Sizer, Cobb and Quaglia devised a 98-question survey instrument, which they have used to gather data from thousands of students, not only from Maine, but from many other states and countries as well. The questionnaire, which they conceive of as "first and foremost a school climate assessment tool," probes for ways in which students invest their time as a means to determine what they consider valuable and the goals to which they aspire (Quaglia, et al 1991:1-4).[17]

Using these data, NCSA researchers have identified eight qualities: belonging, achievement, curiosity, mentoring, self-confidence, empowerment, risk-taking, and excitement (Cobb, Interview, 1993) in schools "that are characterized as having students with a high level of both inspiration and ambitions." NCSA researchers believe these factors are a pre-condition to students' aspirations (Quaglia, draft:7). As we will see, these eight preconditions are more prevalent in the ethos of Tremont Consolidated Grammar School than in the regional high school. The strength of the preconditions both suggests reasons that Tremont School is successful and reasons that some Tremont students encounter difficulties in their transition to Mount Desert Island High School. There is nothing surprising in any of these preconditions, except, perhaps, that they are not more prevalent in American schools. In Chapter Seven, we will look at ways in which the people of Tremont view their school and at ways in which Tremont Grammar School is successful in sustaining these same preconditions for high aspirations.

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[17] For a more complete explication of this survey please see the Appendix.

Formation of Self-Concept

The self mediates between an individual and the environment. How we see ourselves in the present is the result of countless past interactions between ourselves and others in our world. The ability to be inspired, which NCSA identifies as one component of aspirations, may exist in the present, but it is rooted in the past. We must understand how individuals develop a sense of self in order to understand how they will react to the challenge and promise of the present.

The concept of self is "an intellectual construct with roots as far back as the seventeenth century and a personal construct that helps each of us know who we are as individuals..." (Hamachek, 1992:57-62). George Herbert Mead noted that "the self is something which has a development; it is not initially there, at birth, but arises in the process of social experience and activity, that is, develops in the given individual as a result of his relation to that process as a whole and to other individuals within that process" (Mead, 1944:135). Mead did "not assume there is a self to begin with. Self is not presupposed as a stuff out of which the world arises. Rather the self arises in the world" (Mead, 1982:107).

Our concept of self or "self-concept...is our own mental image of ourselves, a collection of beliefs about the kind of person we are," which grows in a social framework (Hamachek, 1992:27).

> As children grow up, they learn to conceive of themselves as having characteristics that are responded to and encouraged by others....They gradually develop a picture of themselves that they then strive to maintain. The feedback they receive in their ongoing social interactions becomes the foundation of an evolving personality. [Hamachek, 1992:18]

In the process of interaction with others, the individual "gets his self:...We are all, in short, constructs of the group in which we live" (Mead, 1982:148). As a lumberjack in an isolated Maine lumber camp told his visitor: "We don't live none too long, anyhow; and without society a fellow could n't tell mor'n half the time whether he was alive or not" (Lowell, 1877:31).

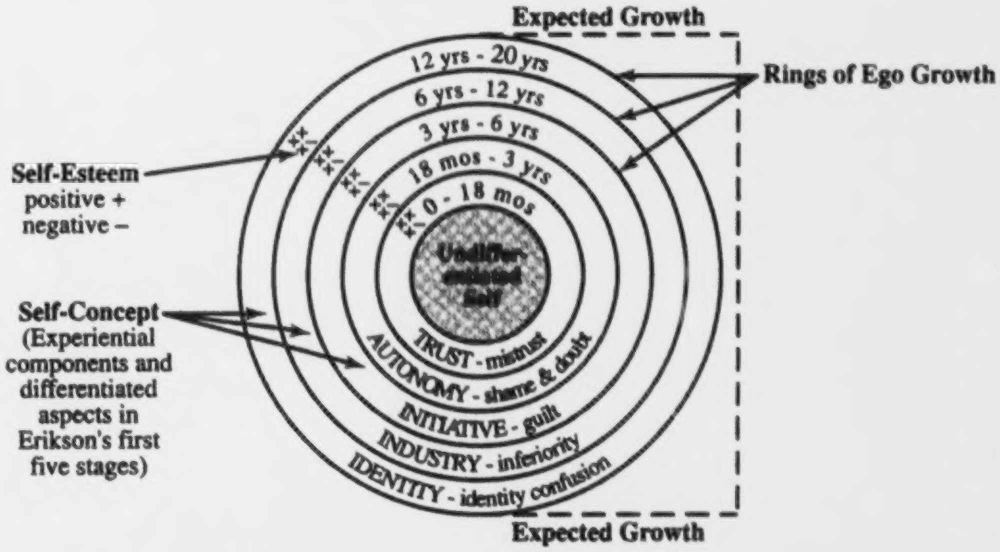
Mead distinguishes two aspects of personality, the "I" and the "me," which evolve together in response to the environment and together constitute the self. The "me" is that

> self which is able to maintain itself in the community, that is recognized by the community in so far as it recognizes the others....The "I" is the response of the individual to the attitude of the community as this appears in his own experience. Both aspects of the "I" and "me" are essential to the self in its full expression. One must take the attitude of the others in a group in order to belong to a community; he has to employ that outer social world taken within himself in order to carry on thought. It is through his relationship to others in that community, because of the rational social processes that obtain in that community, that he has being as a citizen. On the other hand, the individual is constantly reacting to the social attitudes and changing in this co-operative process the very community to which he belongs. [Mead, 1944:199]

We develop our self-concept in relationship to others in expanding circles first encompassing our parents and other members of the family, then people in our community, nation and world. Not coincidentally, children usually develop through predictable stages of growth. Hamachek likens self development to the rings of growth made annually by trees (Figure 2) (Hamachek, 1992:10). Erik Erikson also describes stages of development from infancy through adulthood and old-age, a sequence he believes all healthy people follow, though culture and individual circumstance intervene.

> To us, it is first of all important to realize that in the sequence of significant experiences the healthy child, if properly guided, can be trusted to conform to the epigenetic laws of development as they now create a succession of potentialities for significant interaction with a growing number of individuals and with the mores that govern them. While such interaction varies widely from culture to culture, all cultures must guarantee some essential 'proper rate' and 'proper sequence,' their propriety corresponding to what Hartmann (1939) referred to as 'average expectable'; that is, what is necessary and manageable for all humans, no matter how they differ in personality and cultural pattern. [Erikson, 1985:28]

FIGURE TWO
Rings of Growth


Expected Growth
12 yrs - 20 yrs
6 yrs - 12 yrs
3 yrs - 6 yrs
18 mos - 3 yrs
0 - 18 mos
Rings of Ego Growth
Self-Esteem
positive +
negative –
Undiffer-entiated Self
Self-Concept
(Experiential components and differentiated aspects in Erikson's first five stages)
TRUST - mistrust
AUTONOMY - shame & doubt
INITIATIVE - guilt
INDUSTRY - inferiority
IDENTITY - identity confusion
Expected Growth

A. Healthy Self-Development - Experiential components of self-concept are growth promoting and well differentiated; as a consequence, self-esteem is essentially positive; ego boundaries are intact, wide, flexible; psychological growth is about where expected.

Hamachek, 1992:11

These stages resemble those defined by Piaget, who participated in early discussions with Erikson and "later confirmed that he saw at least no contradiction between his stages and ours" (Erikson, 1985:76).

Hamachek thinks that "the four major components of self-concept: physical, social, emotional and intellectual - interact to influence each other in reciprocal ways" and in turn, "interact with the three major domains of the self: perceived self, ideal self, and real self, to affect the final shape of one's current concept of self" (Hamachek, 1992:57 - 62). Individuals develop their perceived, ideal, and real selves through interaction with and within their micro and macro

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environments. What they learn through these interactions, in turn, influences how they act in the future by defining what they believe they are capable of doing and being.

By comparing their perceived self against their ideal self, individuals develop a sense of efficacy, defining what is and is not possible for them to achieve. Hamachek points out that one measure of mental health and efficacy is the extent to which the ideal, perceived, and real selves overlap or are congruent (Figure 3), which affects an individual's self-esteem. Obviously, the greater the degree of congruence, the higher the sense of self-esteem, as the perceived self and real self are seen to be close to the ideal self. When there is little congruence between the selves, the individual may suffer serious consequences. Karen Horney warns that "the factually hopeless enterprise of trying to measure up to the idealized image...may be the most potent of the factors producing hopelessness (Horney, 1972:184). Feeling hopeless, of course, makes developing aspirations and attaining goals very difficult.

The ideal self is the product of many interactions, which, as Freud and Alice Miller point out, have their origins in a past more distant than we sometimes suppose:

> As a rule, parents and authorities analogous to them follow the precepts of their own super-egos in educating children....Thus a child's super-ego is in fact constructed on the model not of its parents but of its parents' super-ego; the contents which fill it are the same and it becomes the vehicle of tradition and of all the time-resisting judgments of value which have propagated themselves in this manner from generation to generation....Mankind never lives entirely in the present. The past, the tradition of the race and of the people, lives on in the ideologies of the super-ego, and yields only slowly to the influences of the present and to new changes; and so long as it operates through the super-ego it plays a powerful part in human life, independently of economic conditions.[18] [Erikson, 1985:92[19]]

As parents' super-egos were formed by their parents, whose superegos were formed by their parents, the impact of earlier times and generations is still surprisingly forceful in the upbringing and development of children.

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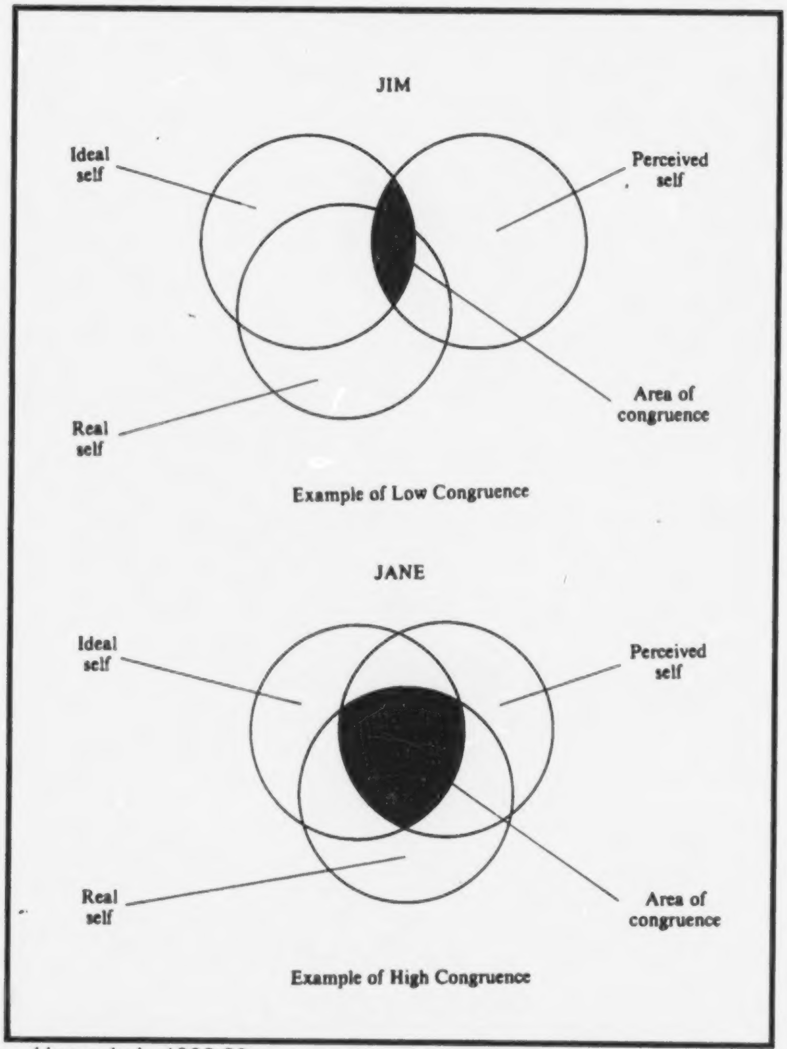
[18] Quoted by Erikson from Freud's *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis,* (1933:67).

[19] See also Alice Miller, For Your Own Good, 1983.

FIGURE THREE
High and Low Congruence of Self-Concept


JIM
Ideal self
Perceived self
Real self
Area of congruence
Example of Low Congruence
JANE
Ideal self
Perceived self
Real self
Area of congruence
Example of High Congruence

Hamachek, 1992:29

Memory, conscious and unconscious, does indeed work forwards as well as backwards. By influencing the self concept, the past influences the individual's perception of the present and his or her ability to be inspired in the present and set goals for the future.

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As suggested by Mead, the individual modifies the "social process...[as] he takes the attitude of the other toward his own stimulus, and in taking that...finds it modified in that his response becomes a different one, and leads in turn to further change" (Mead, 1944:179). Within a community isolated from change, the differences between generations in attitudes, beliefs, values and behavior are minimal and can be accommodated with relative ease. However, if the rate of change accelerates there may be greater disparity between the ways people in different cohorts define the ideal self, with increased tension between different segments of the community.

Csikszentmihalyi uses the image of veils to describe how aspects of self can also act as a barrier between the individual and his or her environment. Genetic and cultural programming are the first two veils; the "world of the self" is the third. "The third distortion of reality begins in the mind and works itself out: it is the side effect of being conscious - the illusion of selfhood....While the self brought the gift of freedom, it also spun another veil, as thick as the two earlier ones: the illusions of the ego," which can be extraordinarily powerful (Csikszentmihalyi, 1994:76-77).

The demands of the ego for gratification can be expressed in many ways. In modern American culture:

> the symbols of the self tend to more of the material kind....Objects give concrete evidence of their owner's power, and the ego can increase its boundaries almost indefinitely by claiming control over greater quantities of material possessions. But the more the self becomes identified with external objects, the more vulnerable it becomes. [Csikszentmihalyi, 1994:80]

Cultures have different ways of feeding the ego, which may be a source of conflict when they come into contact through individuals who are acting as intermediaries.

Even in a small town in Maine, each member of the community experiences a slightly different environment. Each member of a family changes the environment for other members, and each cohort is born into a context affected by different social and historical influences. The difference between generations in norms and values (which contribute to the ideal self and the real self) inevitably leads to conflict between people of different ages who are dealing with a different reality and to what is called "cognitive dissonance" (a concept I explore more fully later). Younger people may feel torn between loyalty to older relatives and mentors and the pressures of dealing with the present and preparing for the future, a future made more uncertain by change and the inability of older people to give appropriate advice or direction based on their own formative expectations. And older people, whose superegos developed during different times, may feel that change is somehow morally wrong and cuts against the grain of what is "supposed to be."

Self-Esteem

The way in which individuals see themselves in the present influences how they set goals and define ambitions. Self-esteem, or the estimation of self-worth and ability, develops as the individual interacts with the environment and meets challenges. Unfortunately, some educators have confused the meanings of self-esteem and self-concept and failed to see that a person develops concepts about various aspects of self. Brookover points out that:

> Most educators and psychologists speak of self-concept as if it were a unitary phenomenon within the individual and with a general applicability to rather disparate social conditions. Accordingly, it is not uncommon to hear educators speak of a student's low or high self-concept as if he held only one self-concept. [Brookover, 1969:101]

Instead we should understand that a person may hold himself in high regard in some areas of his life, for example as a loyal friend, or a hard worker in his family business, and yet feel inadequate in an academic setting. Brookover suggests that "in the United States, as well as in many other cultures, large numbers of students are academically impeded by low self-concept of academic ability [which] functions to set limits of achievement for many students."

However, the recent emphasis on improving self-esteem in students in hopes of raising their academic achievement is misdirected if it is limited to telling them how wonderful they are. "Simply having anyone tell a student with a low self-concept of ability that he is able is not likely to produce results" (Brookover, 1969:112). In order to improve self-concept and self-esteem, an individual must internalize the views of others, but s/he can only do so by testing his or her own abilities against the benchmarks set by others in the society. As Mead suggests, "one can test his ability to jump the ditch only by jumping" (Mead, 1982:154).

True self-esteem can only come when the individual acts to attain goals and realizes aspects of his or her potential that are rewarding. The process of attaining a goal in the present helps the individual set goals or ambitions for the future. Csikszentmihalyi identifies the process that leads to this "self-actualization" as flow. Flow is itself "intrinsically rewarding," a process and time in which "the self is flooded with a sense of exhilaration when we undertake a task that requires complex skills, that leads to a challenging goal. In those moments we feel that, instead of suffering through events over which we have no control, we are creating our own lives...we experience enjoyment when we take on a project that stretches our skills in new directions, when we recognize and master new challenges" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1994:175). Interestingly, flow seems marvelously democratic. "Flow can occur in almost any activity....Flow appears to be a phenomenon everyone feels the same way, regardless of age or gender, cultural background or social class" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1994:177).

Unfortunately - in an equally democratic manner - when individuals do not have a goal and do not experience flow in their lives they become depressed and disoriented (Csikszentmihalyi, 1994:190).

> It is no exaggeration to say that a great many of our social problems are due to the lack of flow in everyday life. Addiction to various chemicals is obviously an attempt to recapture some of the qualities of optimal experience by artificial means....But artificially induced flow is dangerous on two counts" first, it does not stretch skills and hence does not lead to complexity and second, when it becomes physiologically addictive, it causes enormous amounts of entropy to the individual and to the group. [Csikszentmihalyi, 1994:198]

The danger of passive activities, such as watching television, is that they offer almost no opportunity to experience flow, which diminishes self-esteem. Csikszentmihalyi thinks "people who are often in flow have higher self-esteem than those who experience flow rarely" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1994:204). To repeat Mead's idea - one has to jump the ditch, or at least try, to know that one can, or to learn what one must do to succeed. The culture in which the individual exists must offer immediate opportunities (like ditches to jump) in order for people to develop confidence in their ability - and the ability itself. Practice may not make perfect, but it certainly increases the likelihood of improvement.

Social Learning Theory: reciprocal-determinism and self-efficacy

Interacting with the environment is an ongoing dialogue for all individuals - one that involves the past, present and future. Social learning theory, developed by Albert Bandura, helps us understand the importance of the social context in forming self-concept and aspirations. Building upon, but in contrast to, earlier notions about human development and motivation,[20] Albert Bandura developed "social learning theory," which states that "What people think, believe, and feel affects how they behave." The premise of social learning theory is that:

> people's conceptions about themselves and the nature of things are developed and verified through four different processes: direct experience of the effects produced by their actions, vicarious experience of the effects produced by somebody else's actions, judgments voiced by others, and derivation of further knowledge from what they already know by using rules of inference. [Bandura, 1986:27]

Although personal agency is socially rooted and influenced by culture, individuals act within a "triadic reciprocality" with their environment and personalities. Bandura adds that people also act on their environments and that there is constant interaction between the individual, his or her behavior, and the environment in which he or she lives.

In sum, Bandura suggests that theories of "stage development" do not adequately account for interaction of the individual with the varying micro and macro environments that affect maturation. Furthermore, stages of growth are inadequate predictors of development because the individual functions within spheres that interact. A child is born into a particular family, and into a particular place in that family. The family lives within a community, and within a particular place in that community, just as the community lies within both a particular culture and the larger culture.

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[20] Such as Piaget's "stage theory."

Each unit influences the others and is influenced in return. The process is fluid and inter-active, but works within the limits and variation of human physical, cognitive, and emotional potential.[21]

Reciprocal Determinism

Two key concepts defined by Bandura are particularly useful in understanding the formation of aspirations. The first, "reciprocal determinism," states that "because personal agency is socially rooted and operates within sociocultural influences, individuals can be viewed as both products and producers of their own environments and of their social systems" (Pajares, 1996:544). The second, social learning theory:

> approaches the explanation of human behavior in terms of a continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental determinants....This conception of human functioning neither casts people into the role of powerless objects controlled by environmental forces, nor free agents who can become whatever they choose. Both the people and their environment are reciprocal determinants of each other. [Hamachek, 1992:135]

Although conceptually we can isolate these influences, "in everyday life two-way control operates concurrently" (Bandura, 1977:204). Again, we see that the past, present and future are inextricably intertwined, that the individual sets goals and defines ambitions s/he has learned through interaction with the environment, and that are both possible and acceptable.

Self-Efficacy

The second concept that informs our understanding of aspirations is "self-efficacy," which Bandura describes as "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations" (Bandura, 1995:2). Belief in one's ability to do whatever is necessary to achieve a goal or resolve a problem "not only reduces anticipatory fears and inhibitions but, through expectations of eventual success, it affects coping efforts once they are initiated" (Bandura, 1977:80). Just as fear cripples the fearful, so self-efficacy enables those who learn to be confident in their abilities. Researchers at the National Center for Student Aspirations agree that self-efficacy is an essential component of inspiration. They define inspiration as "the assurance, the confidence, the participation in positive experiences necessary to successful and effective functioning," including, "an important aspect of this dimension...perceived self-efficacy" (Quaglia et al., 1991:5).

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[21] See also Dr. Richard Weissbourd, 1996, Ch. 2.

Like Mead, Bandura thinks people develop their concept of self-efficacy through "mastery experiences," "vicarious experiences" offered by models, and "social persuasion." Bandura considers mastery the most effective (as long as the event is perceived as challenging yet doable) as it rewards persistence and accomplishment, but also offers opportunities to overcome barriers, which develops resilience (Bandura, 1995:3). Mastery is an essential reward if an individual is to learn and continue learning, as "cognitive events are induced and altered most readily by experience of mastery arising from successful performance" (Bandura, 1977:79).

Models after whom the child patterns his behavior and aspirations can offer "vicarious experiences" through which the individual develops self-efficacy. Bandura notes that:

> The impact of modeling on personal efficacy is strongly influenced by perceived similarity to the models. The greater the assumed similarity, the more persuasive are the models' successes and failures. If people see the models as very different from themselves, their feelings of personal efficacy are not much influenced by the models' behavior and the results it produces.
>
> Modeling influences do more than simply provide a social standard against which to judge one's own capabilities. People seek proficient models who possess the competencies to which they aspire. Through their behavior and expressed ways of thinking, competent models transmit knowledge and teach observers effective skills and strategies for managing environmental demands. [Bandura, 1995:3 - 4]

It is important to note that the models that most closely resemble the modeler are the ones s/he is most likely to understand and incorporate into his or her own sense of self. This suggests that in a community in flux, children are most likely to model themselves on those to whom they feel most similar. Until and unless the breach between the new and old culture becomes too great, and/or children develop a relationship with new models, they will continue to use old models because the new ones seem too foreign to apply to them.

"Social persuasion" is the third way individuals develop self-efficacy and set future goals. Citing researchers Litt and Schunk, Bandura reports: "People who are persuaded verbally that they possess the capabilities to master given activities are likely to mobilize greater effort and sustain it than if they harbor self-doubts and dwell on personal deficiencies when problems arise (Bandura,1995:4)."

Belief in efficacy affects schools in three important areas: the students' beliefs in their efficacy "to regulate their own learning and to master different academic subjects; teachers' beliefs in their personal efficacy to motivate and promote learning in their students; and faculties' collective sense of efficacy that their schools can accomplish significant academic progress" (Bandura, 1995:17). Bandura suggests that the most effective schools are those in which students believe they can learn, and where peer groups support learning, as do teachers and administrators who are enabled to create "mastery experiences" for their students. Conversely, schools in which students, teachers, and staff feel powerless create an atmosphere in which learning is almost impossible. "With staffs who firmly believe that students are motivatable and teachable, schools heavily populated with poor and minority students achieve high levels on standardized measures of academic competencies" (Bandura, 1995:21).

In the context of modeling of behavior and aspirations, Bandura suggests that "efficacy beliefs reduce or eliminate anxiety...by supporting effective codes of behavior that change threatening environments into safe ones. Major changes in aversive social conditions are usually achieved through the exercise of efficacy collectively rather than just individually" (Bandura, 1995:9). This suggests that existing beliefs, values, and ways of being, like incumbent politicians, have an advantage over those seeking office.[22]

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[22] Bandura contrasts cultures that favor individualism or collectivism, those that are more feminine or masculine, those that embrace uncertainty or avoid it, and those that incorporate people into decision making or distance them from power (Bandura, 1995:34). I think it is useful here to note that there are other ways to distinguish between cultures, as Ruth Benedict did in drawing distinctions between Dionysian and Apollonian cultures.

The crucial link between self-efficacy and academic performance forms through the individual's interaction with his or her environment and growing belief about his or her abilities and disabilities. As individuals define what they are willing to invest in, they also define what they will become. In short, what the student aspires to be is based in large part on who s/he believes s/he already is. "Bandura painted a portrait of human behavior and motivation in which the beliefs that people have about themselves are key elements in the exercise of control and personal agency...[and which] powerfully influence the ways in which they will behave" (Pajares, 1996:543).

Although there are problems in assessing self-efficacy accurately:

> researchers have reported that self-efficacy beliefs are correlated with other self beliefs, motivation constructs, and academic choices, changes, and achievement. [Pajares, 1996: 552]
>
> In general, there is ample reason to believe that self-efficacy is a powerful motivation construct that works well to predict academic self-beliefs and performances at varying levels but works best when theoretical guidelines and procedures regarding specificity and correspondence are adhered to. [Pajares, 1996:557][23]

In part, self-efficacy works by rewarding students for their investment of time by giving them perceptions of achievement, and even mastery, which influence future investment of time and effort.

Because we construct an image of ourselves through our interactions with other people in our lives, the information they feed back to us helps us create a picture of ourselves that defines acceptable behaviors, goals, values, and aspirations. We continuously create and re-create ourselves, not only in reaction to people in our immediate environment, but also in response to our perception of their reactions to us, to our experiences and to our innate characteristics.[24] Though largely unconscious, this process of definition and re-definition is most powerfully affected by people in our primary groups, but is also influenced by characters we meet in books, through the mass media, and in such venues as work and school. Therefore, we must understand what a culture and community rewards in order to understand decisions students make about such investment and how they define aspirations.

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[23] The reader may be interested in Dr. Pajares's article which includes a critique of self-efficacy testing.

[24] Hamachek suggests that behaviors are inheritable and that the environment works on our genetic predisposition, a conviction shared by social learning theorists.

Bandura's theories on development of self-efficacy help us to understand the success of Tremont School. As we will see, many of the teachers at the school are believable role models for the children because they are from the community. The school offers children an extraordinarily nurturing and supportive environment that helps them develop positive ideas about what they can accomplish, as well as opportunities to learn and practice academic, physical, artistic and social skills. However, as other researchers have observed, there is a "tendency among members to aspire to the collective level of aspiration of the group," which suggests that it is critically important to raise group levels of aspiration when working with individuals.

> The expectation and standards of the group significantly impact the aspirations of its members regardless of their level of achievement motivation. In other words, the aspiration level of the individual group members is buoyed by the prevailing group standard. Thus, even those with an inner drive to achieve limit their accomplishments to the success level of the group; they fear being ostracized or alienated from the group. This tendency toward uniformity is more pronounced the more isolated the culture. [Quaglia and Cobb, 1996:129 - 130.]

The more isolated the culture, as in Tremont and rural areas everywhere, the more important it is to buoy the level of aspirations instead of letting it sink under the weight of cultural norms that work against post-secondary schooling. The preconditions for aspirations identified by the National Center for Student Aspirations are closely related to development of a strong sense of self-efficacy for students as individuals, but also as members of groups. The pressure to conform to group norms leads us to consider the power of cognitive dissonance.

Cognitive Dissonance

Another concept, cognitive dissonance, operating in the present, helps us understand the pressure students from one cultural background may feel when navigating a culture emphasizing norms, values and goals different from their own.[25] Based on his observations of Indian villagers coping with the aftermath of a devastating earthquake, Leon Festinger developed the concept of cognitive dissonance to explain a person's reaction to change. Since a developing individual "strives towards consistency within himself, [his] opinions and attitudes...tend to exist in clusters that are internally consistent" (Festinger, 1989:204). Unless challenged by unusual events or outside influences, beliefs, or behaviors, attitudes and values are synchronized, creating a condition called "consonance."[26]

Festinger uses the term "knowledges" for these beliefs, behaviors, attitudes, and values, because the individual learns them throughout a lifetime. If unchallenged, these "knowledges" will be in consonance and constitute a well-integrated whole: a way of life and of being. Using Hamachek's terminology, the individual will experience a satisfying congruence of his or her perceived, real and ideal selves.

However, when for any reason the "knowledges" are challenged, consonance is threatened and the individual experiences "dissonance." New ideas, values, attitudes, beliefs, economic and political realities and behaviors can threaten equilibrium or consonance. Festinger cites several reasons that dissonance arises, but most useful to our discussion are the ideas that cultural mores become at variance with new situations and that dissonance arises when "past experience" is invalid due to a change in the environment.

Hamachek suggests that when there is little overlap of the three selves (ideal, perceived and real) the individual experiences conflict, frustration, and lack of fulfillment, states subsumed in the concept of cognitive dissonance. Cognitive dissonance, therefore, describes how we see ourselves when "how we behave [or think we should behave] is at odds with our basic attitudes or beliefs" (Hamachek, 1992:121). Cognitive dissonance is also what we feel when our aspirations are at odds with socially accepted norms.[27] Another way of thinking about this is that goals set in the past come into conflict with the reality of the present and the individual must mediate between his or her past, present, and future, which can be painful and difficult.

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[25] Festinger states, "By the term *cognition*...I mean any knowledge, opinion or belief about the environment, about oneself, or about one's behavior (Festinger, 1987: 206).

[26] Festinger remarks that "there is the same consistency between what a person knows or believes and what he does. A person who believes a college education is a good thing will very likely encourage his children to go to college (Festinger, 1987:204).

Cognitive dissonance produces a tension that drives a person to act, and may, thereby, redefine the future. Festinger hypothesizes that:

> 1) The existence of dissonance, being psychologically uncomfortable, will motivate the person to try to reduce the dissonance and achieve consonance.
>
> 2) When dissonance is present, in addition to trying to reduce it, the person will actively avoid situations and information which would likely increase the dissonance. [Festinger, 1987:203]

Because "cognitive dissonance" motivates an individual, it can be seen "as an antecedent condition which leads to activity oriented toward dissonance reduction" (Festinger 1987:206), which suggests that the individual can change by incorporating the new element or turn away from it and deny its existence.

When an individual is uncomfortable, s/he is motivated to make a change that reestablishes consonance. This change need only be consistent with the pre-existing perception of self and "knowledges" to reduce dissonance; it does not need to be sensible or effective or even understandable to an outsider. The actions the individual takes may even seem illogical to an outsider, but they will be attempts to reduce or avoid dissonance. In order to reduce dissonance, the individual may try to change an element in the environment, or his or her behavior. S/he may try to change what s/he thinks about it or attempt to establish "a social reality by gaining the agreement and support of other people" (Schacter, 1989:218). If all else fails, the individual is most likely to try to minimize the importance of the element causing dissonance in his or her life by discounting it in some way.

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[27] Though my editor notes that "It seems possible that new knowledge could provide consonance by explaining things previously uncertain."

Because children may experience problems when their goals are at odds with socially accepted norms, attitudes, values and behaviors, cognitive dissonance is an important concept when considering the influence of culture on aspirations. And, of course, as a motivator to action or inaction, cognitive dissonance can affect aspirations. Thwarted aspirations will cause dissonance in an individual and drive him or her to find a means to ameliorate the resulting tension.

For students in Tremont, and in many other subcultures as well, aspirations the dominant culture promotes through schools, mass media, and the attention paid certain individuals may be at odds with aspirations valued by family members, friends, and other important people in the individual's life. In order to claim ownership of new aspirations, a child may feel s/he has to disavow what s/he has learned from these people - a wrenching and painful task that is impossible for many, and one which many teachers and administrators may not appreciate.

In addition, in preparing for the future, people in all cultures face a fundamental problem. We look at the future not through a crystal ball, but through a series of lenses formed by our self-concept. How can our actions be predicated on logic and our decisions be rational when we know (or think we know) only what has happened, not what will happen? This is intensified in a society in which preparation for the future requires many years of investment and in which rapid change may make specific knowledge and ways of being obsolete before completion of this preparation. Coupled with the condition of cognitive dissonance, this may stifle or misdirect ambitions and inspiration, which define aspirations.

There is little dissonance when an individual and a culture have developed long-standing means for affirming consonance; however, change can create dissonance on an individual as well as a group level. There are interesting links between the phenomenon of cognitive dissonance in individuals and acculturation, which occurs between cultures, though mediated through individuals. In both cognitive dissonance and acculturation, change is the result of tension the individual or individuals in a group feel and resolve by choosing action or inaction. Change on a cultural level may occur for similar reasons as it does on the individual level. New ideas, technologies, and political and economic realities may alter the environment or the way people perceive it. Just as the ideal, perceived, and real selves exist on an individual level, so they exist on a cultural level; when there is dissonance, the culture must undertake ways to resolve it, or suffer from dysfunction and tension.

Summary

As we grow from infancy, through childhood and into adulthood, most of us increase the number of people with whom we interact and take a more active role in creating our selves (and the selves of those with whom we come into contact). As we develop our sense of self through interaction with our environment we also establish who we will become by beginning to define who we are. We are, then, products of and producers of our environment, an environment created by our particular circumstances of family, friends, and community, but also by the larger culture and history that provide the stage on which we play our roles. We look now at the culture and history of Maine and Tremont that set the stage on which students from Tremont define their aspirations.

CHAPTER THREE

The Culture

In this chapter we look at the concept of the "primary group," *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft,* and the characteristics of rural society to understand better the culture of Maine, and in particular that of Tremont.

The Primary Group

We can see the importance of students' life outside school by looking at the power of the "primary group," which is most critical during childhood, but continues to influence its members throughout their lives. The primary group may include members of the nuclear and extended families, people in the community, friends, classmates, or co-workers. As a person matures and his or her roles change, composition of the primary group will also change. However, in a small community it is likely that people who are classmates may also be in the same extended family, may later work together, or may marry into each other's families. Small size of the community and physical proximity allowing "face-to-face" relations are "conditions affecting the formation of primary groups" (Shils, 1951:44).

American sociologist Charles H. Cooley first defined the term "primary group," as follows:

> By primary groups I mean those characterized by intimate face-to-face association and cooperation. They are primary in several senses, but chiefly in that they are fundamental in forming the social nature and ideals of the individual. The result of intimate association, psychologically, is a certain fusion of individualities in a common whole, so that one's very self, for many purposes at least, is the common life and purpose of the group. Perhaps the simplest way of describing this wholeness is by saying that it is a "we"; it involves the sort of sympathy and mutual identification of which "we" is the natural expression. One lives in the feeling of the whole and finds the chief aims of his will in that feeling.
>
> It is not to be supposed that the unity of the primary group is one of mere harmony and love. It is always a differentiated and usually a competitive unity, admitting of self-assertion

> and various appropriate passions, but these passions are socialized by sympathy, and come, or tend to come, under the discipline of a common spirit.
>
> Primary groups are primary in the sense that they give the individual his earliest and completest experience of social unity, and also in the sense that they do not change in the same degree as more elaborate relations, but form a comparatively permanent source out of which the latter are ever springing. Of course, they are not independent of the larger society, but to some extent reflect its spirit.
>
> The view here maintained is that human nature is not something existing separately in the individual, but a *group nature or primary phase of society*, a relatively simple and general condition of the social mind. [Cooley, 1919:23 -29]

The primary group is the vital socializing force, as well as the arbiter of values, norms and behavior. The "primary group" operates in societies large and small, and it is useful to think of its power within these different contexts.

Others, including Confucius, Aristotle, Plato, and Ibn Khaldun, had discussed "two modes of mentality and behavior...as two different types of society" (Toennies, 1957: ix), and Durkheim, Redfield, and many others would continue the discussion, but German sociologist Ferdinand Toennies (1855 -1936) distinguished two basic forms of social organization, and terms he used, *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft,* community and society, have endured.

In part, the distinction is based on the differences between rural, peasant society and modern capitalistic society centered in cities.[28] Toennies thought the progression or change from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft* cultures was natural but not irreversible.[29] *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* are ideal types representing poles on a continuum. These "concepts or ideal types...are based primarily upon natural will and rational will" (Toennies, 1957:4).[30]

Toennies thought that the actions of people who are controlled by natural will resemble the organic functions of growing things while those who are governed by rational will are more apt to follow models or plans with logical precision (Toennies, 1957:6). Natural will prevails when people associate "because they think the relation valuable as an end in itself" (Toennies, 1957:5). However, rational will, which underlies *Gesellschaft* societies, dominates when people form a relationship in order "to attain through it a definite end and are willing to join hands for this purpose, even though indifference or even antipathy may exist on other levels" (Toennies, 1995:5). "When people are used as mere means to an end, even as 'inanimate things,' such usage is governed by rational will. The slave driver or industrial magnate is governed by rational will in his use of men, the peasant by natural will in the use of his family and servants" (Toennies, 1995:6).

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[28] This distinction, of course, becomes less distinct as the economy of rural societies becomes more capitalistic.

[29] It is interesting to note that he foresaw the excesses of the *Gesellschaft* culture (as we are living them out today) and that he predicted people might turn away from overly regulated and alienating societies, seeking again the "natural" bonds of family, land and other ties.

[30] Max Weber also used the concept of the "ideal type" (Weber, 1958).

What distinguishes these appositional types?

1a) "*Gemeinschaft* types of society have a traditionally defined fund of knowledge handed down as conclusive and final; they are not concerned with discovering new ideas or extending their spheres of knowledge. Any effort to test the traditional knowledge, insofar as it implies doubt, is ruled out on moral grounds" (Toennies, 1957:28).

1b) *Gesellschaft* types of organization institutionalize techniques for the attainment and codification of knowledge.

2a) Life in a *Gemeinschaft* culture centers around the family and, through the family and/or clan, other members of the village. Often the land itself binds the people through shared economic concerns. Statuses are ascribed at birth, and there is a fixed body of needs. Rarely, until introduced to them from the outside, do people crave goods they cannot provide for themselves, and having too much, or "getting ahead," goes against social norms. Because there is a small number of people to draw upon, individuals often play many roles, further binding them as a unit.

2b) In the larger *Gesellschaft* society, people do not know each other as well, extended families may be fractured because economic commitments are more important than familial ones, needs cannot be fulfilled by small units, and many new or derived needs are created, in part to keep the economy active. People begin to look to the state - or the company for which they work - for assistance, rather than to their family.

Regardless of the importance of the primary group in a *Gemeinschaft* culture, many sociologists and other theorists have thought it was a developmental dead-end. Ignoring Durkheim's evidence that *anomie* was the penalty for erosion of the primary group, most sociologists, particularly those influenced by Marxism, saw it as only a stepping-block that would be kicked aside when society matured to full industrialization. However fundamental and even "human" the traits of *Gemeinschaft* may seem, at least to some of us, many social scientists and politicians assumed that they would wither in response to the more "evolved" structures of *Gesellschaft*. Shils states that:

> In their perception of the movement from "status" to "contract," from *Gemeinschaft* ("community") to *Gesellschaft* ("society"), from "mechanical solidarity" to "organic solidarity," sociologists saw modern society as impersonal, coordinated by actions based on expediential calculations, and highly individualistic....The persistence of traditionally regulated informal and intimate relations was regarded as an archaism inherited from an older rural society or from a small-town handicraft society. The relations were not thought to possess any significant function in the operation of the "great society." Thus Toennies...although analyzing in Gemeinschaft a type of social structure having many of the characteristics of a primary group, treated the two social structures as logically antithetical and empirically incompatible....He failed to see that their coexistence was not simply the result of a lingering survival and that the persistent elements of Gemeinschaft had a more important function than the mere prevention of the full development of Gesellschaft. [Shils, 1951:44]

Such theorists seem to have seen *Gemeinschaft* communities as examples of arrested social development that would eventually vanish. Though under tremendous pressure in modern society, the "primary group" in a small rural culture has not withered and died. Indeed, the "primary group" forms the basis of so many relationships in a small society that it is a powerful influence on behavior, values and beliefs.

Those of us interested in rural education think an anti-rural bias still prevails in an education policy which only recently has acknowledged that small schools can offer advantages to students, particularly those from low SES homes (Howley, 1995), and which still actively promotes consolidation. The intimate scale of rural schools enhances the development of close bonds between students and teachers and between the school and its community, and that the central problems of urban schooling are related to the extent to which we have forgotten the strengths of primary groups in *Gemeinschaft* cultures.

Tony Wagner underscores the importance of primary groups for schools:

> One of the least discussed problems in young peoples' development today is their critical isolation from adults. A study conducted by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Reed Larson revealed that adolescents spend more time alone than with either peers or adults. Single-parent and dual-career families, combined with the dramatic loss of formal and informal extracurricular and apprenticeship opportunities for adolescents, have all taken a toll. Perhaps for the first time in history, we are raising a generation of young people without significant contact with adults. And so the majority have few opportunities for socialization into productive adult activities and society. It is perhaps for this reason that famed educator and Central Park Schools founder Deborah Meier has observed that establishing meaningful relationships between adults and students in her school was at least as important as all the changes made in teaching, curriculum, and assessment. [Wagner, 1996:38]

An important part of the success of small rural schools is due to the strength of primary groups in rural areas and the contact children have with adults. However, conversely, the difficulties rural students have in adjusting to larger consolidated high schools or post secondary institutions may be related to difficulties they have in separating from their primary group. We can most clearly see this pattern in an extreme case, such as Tremont, Maine, but to varying degrees it exists in other areas of Maine and in rural places throughout the United States.

The Rural Community

Traits that Ferdinand Toennies identifies in *Gemeinschaft* communities, and that George Foster and Robert Redfield describe in "peasant" or "folk" communities, are apparent in modern rural areas such as Tremont, Maine.[31] As we have seen, life in a *Gemeinschaft* culture focuses on the nuclear and extended family, land and work, ascribed statuses, and fixed needs. Because there is a small number of people to draw upon, individuals often play many roles, further weaving them together as a unit. Redfield sums up peasant traits as follows: "an intense attachment to native soil, a reverent disposition toward habitat and ancestral ways; a restraint on individual self-seeking in favor of family and community; a certain suspiciousness, mixed with appreciation, of town life; a sober and earthy ethic" (Redfield, 1996b:78).

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[31] We should remember that the term "peasant" is derived from the word *pays* meaning land. Redfield's term "peasant community" may sound pejorative to the modern ear - and cause some to discard his considerable wisdom in identifying a culture that stood midway between that of highly industrialized modern society and technologically primitive groups of hunter-gatherers. I think it is a useful term, distinguishing people closely bound to particular land (and in the case of coastal Maine, the sea) for sustenance that goes well beyond a mere source of livelihood.

Peasants draw stability from their relationship to the land (or the source of sustenance), from their immediate and extended families, and from communities (Redfield, 1960b:61). In addition, most respect hard work, particularly agricultural work, look distrustfully at commerce, and scorn people in towns as lazy and easily tired by physical work. Redfield believes rural peasants almost universally maintain "a social attitude toward work, a satisfaction in working long and hard in the fields, a disinclination to adventure or to speculate...a distaste for violence, [and] a disfavor of prowess in any form of conspicuous aggressiveness" (Redfield, 1960 b:78). Though others may disagree, I have seen these traits in people in Tremont. Perhaps my identification of peasant traits confirms and is confirmed by Redfield and Foster, since only after puzzling over my observations and describing them to myself as similar to "Third World" patterns of thinking did I rediscover their work.

In folk communities, norms and values take on a moral authority that is rarely as powerful in diverse urban populations. Going against deeply held values and norms is difficult in a small community because it may seem a betrayal, not only of people whom the individual knows intimately, but also of what is moral and just. "Gemeinschaft types of society have a traditionally defined fund of knowledge handed down as conclusive and final; they are not concerned with discovering new ideas or extending their spheres of knowledge. Any effort to test the traditional knowledge, insofar as it implies doubt, is ruled out on moral grounds" (Toennies, 1957:28). Redfield also asserts the power of culture and history on the present and future when he says: "...in every community, primitive or civilized, what most importantly surrounds and influences the people are the traditions, sentiments, norms, and aspirations that make up the common mental life. The world of men is made up in the first place of ideas and ideals" (Redfield, 1960a:30).

Redfield describes the "little community" of peasant society as distinct from the "primitive world," in part because of its relationship with the larger society. He identifies the peasant community as "small, homogeneous, self-sufficient" (Redfield, 1960a:4) and quotes Kroeber's observation that "peasants are definitely rural - yet live in relation to market towns...form[ing] a class segment of a larger population which usually contains urban centers, sometimes metropolitan capitals. They constitute part-societies with part-culture" (Redfield, 1960b:19).

To Redfield, the peasant culture is a half-culture reflecting the larger culture to which it responds. "It is an aspect or dimension of the civilization of which it is a part....In contrast to a 'primitive' society, the peasant society "requires continual communication to the local community of thought originating outside of it...[and] the peasant village invites us to attend to the long course of interaction between that community and centers of civilization" (Redfield, 1960a:40). Citing George Foster, he adds that "one of the most obvious distinctions between truly primitive societies and folk [peasant] societies is that the latter, over hundreds of years, have had constant contact with the centers of intellectual thought and development" (Redfield, 1960a:40).[32]

Foster himself states: "Peasant communities exist in an intimate relationship with cities and towns. Peasants are primarily farmers, and sometimes artisans as well" (Foster, 1962:46). The peasant depends on the city for his religion, his philosophy, and his government, which come to him through the process of "diffusion."

> Peasant communities represent the rural expression of large class-structured, economically complex, pre-industrial civilizations, in which trade and commerce and craft specialization are well developed, in which money is commonly used, and in which market disposition is the goal for a part of the producer's efforts. The city is the principal source of innovation for such communities, and it holds the political, religious, and economic reins. [Foster, 1962:46-47]

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[32] It is, of course, this kind of anti-rural bias, one that suggests intellects only function within city limits, that has blinded modern educators to the strengths of rural education.

The implications of these ties are important. "The basic decisions affecting such villages are made from the outside." The villager has little or no control over these decisions and "usually he doesn't even know how or why they are made" (Foster, 1962:47). Arthur Vidich and Joseph Bensman studied a small village in rural New York they called Springdale "to explore the foundations of social life in a community which lacks the power to control the institutions that regulate and determine its existence" (Vidich and Bensman, 1968: xviii). Seeing these forces in the same dim light as the power of the supernatural, the villager "can plead, implore, propitiate, and hope for a miracle, but in neither case can he expect by his own action to have any effective control" (Foster, 1962:47-48).

The peasant is affected by his or her proximity to the larger society and culture of town, city and nation.[33] Institutions, including the school, may be intrusions into the village, originating outside of it but bound in varying degrees to the life of the community (Redfield, 1960a:42). Interaction with such institutions has profound effect on the "little community." The peasant may also come into contact with the larger society through the market or in the person of a member of the local educated elite or "intelligentsia." This local elite may, in fact, mediate between the two societies (Redfield, 1960a:38-41).

This contact can have a powerful influence in forming and re-forming the self-concept of the peasant, as well as the members of the dominant society with whom he comes into contact. The self-concept of the peasant is defined in part by his or her relationship to people who are perceived to be more powerful, affluent, mobile, and educated.

> The villager has been victimized by persons more knowledgeable than he since the beginning of time. He knows he is a rustic, a bumpkin who, in his necessary trips to town, will be taken advantage of by men without conscience....The villager sees a world that contrasts with the safety and security of the village....The outside world is fraught with dangers...it is unpredictable and cannot be understood....Fearing the unknown, he values his traditional ways and the predictable quality of life within this microcosmic world, his village....With so much of the world not subject to control and not even understood, it is not surprising to find that the critical sense of the peasant operates within narrow limits. In my

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[33] See also Edward Shils, Center and Periphery, 1975.

> experience, and that of others, the peasant is able to believe the most improbable things.[34] [Foster, 1962:48 - 49]

However, the peasant's image of himself also includes seeing the townspeople as less attached to family and land, and as weaker physically and morally. "The townsman or the gentry form an aspect of the local moral life - form it by reflection, by the presence of example, by the model these outsiders offer, whether that model be one the peasant seeks to imitate or to avoid or whether he merely recognizes both its likeness to and its difference from his own ideas" (Redfield, 1960b:73-76).

Redfield discusses the pronounced effect of change on the peasant society, in contrast to the more isolated and therefore static "primitive" group. Of particular interest is Redfield's discussion of the difficulty of transmitting culture between three living generations when what once "worked" no longer does. Younger people lured by the more permissive and anonymous dominant culture may discount the more traditional and family/community oriented values of local culture. Redfield points to the conservatism in local village or peasant cultures, which will help us understand both the success of the school in Tremont and the reluctance of some of its children to extend their schooling beyond high school.

Redfield shows how as cultures react to changing circumstances and opportunities, old statuses and roles are lost, new ones are created, and the advice of elders becomes outdated and maladaptive. He cites Firth's statement that "the ideals of many people were still much as before, and even some of their earlier expectations lingered on" (Redfield, 1960a:30-34). We might call this phenomenon "social skeumorphism," from the term skeumorphism that describes a trait persisting in ornamental design long after it has lost its utilitarian value.[35] I argue, for example, that fearing children who have post-secondary schooling will leave the island to find professional work is an example of "social skeumorphism" because it is no longer valid.[36]

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[34] Of course, "peasants" may find their visitors' perspectives equally improbable.

[35] For example, the pattern of reed mats that once lined the ceiling of the tombs in the Valley of the Kings persisted in ceiling designs long after Egyptians abandoned their use in construction, and Greek amphorae depicted handles even when the Greeks no longer added them because they cracked too easily.

Some aspects of a culture, for example the availability of jobs and the requirements of those jobs, may change faster than others, such as a kinship system or traditional values about families and work.

> In societies which have experienced considerable change of life conditions we shall find, in context, kinds of human careers in which expectancies are regularly created only to be regularly defeated. We shall find kinds of people who are taught to look forward to a career which they are not allowed to fulfill....There is an important inconsistency between the desires created and the realities that the social structure provides. [Redfield, 1960a:62]

The resulting tensions may be hard for the culture to absorb, or create cognitive dissonance which produces seemingly dysfunctional patterns of behavior.

Redfield states that Kroeber used the word "ethos" to sum up the "total quality" of a culture, "the system of ideals and values that dominate the culture and so tend to control the type of behavior of its members" and which are "what is sanctioned and what is not" (Redfield, 1960a:67-70). By describing the ethos, we (and Kroeber) are also describing what people construe as "the good life," a way of life that may differ markedly from one culture to another. Redfield notes that "peasant activity...is so organized as to provide for what the people there accept as a good life. A structure of meanings gives the pleasure that comes from a life well lived with little. Satisfactions come from the exercise of unquestioned virtues and the enjoyment of one's own skills and the fruits of one's own labor" (Redfield, 1960b:65, 71, 73).

How people define what is good in life and what constitutes "the good life" greatly influences their aspirations and what they will work to achieve. But as the definition of the "good life" changes from one based on satisfaction of basic needs and social interaction to a life based on satisfaction of derived needs, people's feelings of self-worth are more vulnerable because derived needs are being created constantly and by definition (and the necessities of the economy) cannot be satiated.

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[36] Making a different, but related point, Csikszentmihalyi notes that "cultural loyalties often push people to act with even greater disregard for their best interest than genetic instructions do" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1994:71).

Foster describes one of the most significant differences between peasant society and modern industrialized society.

> *The peasant economy is essentially nonproductive*; peasants ordinarily are very poor people. Their resources, particularly land, are limited and there is not enough to go around. Productive techniques...are essentially static...or declining....The total 'productive pie' of the village does not greatly change and moreover, *there is no way to increase it however hard the individual works*, unless new land and improved techniques become available [emphasis in the original]. [Foster, 1962:52-53]

Because methods of production cap what peasants produce, if one person or family seems to "get ahead" they are immediately suspect - they must have cheated, made a pact with the Devil, or done something wrong to succeed.

> The evidence indicates that villagers frequently are suspicious of each other, filled with envy, ready to suspect the worst about their neighbors, distrustful in the extreme. The quality of interpersonal relations appears to be bad, and true cooperation is largely limited to certain traditional types of labor exchanges in agriculture and house building. [Foster, 1962:50]

This way of thinking can poison interaction between villagers and make it very difficult to implement any projects for positive change.

Foster and Redfield have been criticized and may now seem out-of-date. For example, Oscar Lewis, in reporting on his re-assessment of Tepoztlan, a Mexican village first studied by Redfield, points out that "Redfield's interest was primarily in the study of a single cultural process: the evolution from folk to urban, rather that a well-rounded ethnographic account" (Lewis, 1951:432). Lewis goes on to show how focusing on the process of evolution to what, as mentioned earlier, many thought was "inevitable" progress to urban society, flaws Redfield's ability to report and interpret specific cultural artifacts and patterns of behavior.[37]

Lewis chides Redfield for painting a romantic vision of life in peasant communities.

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[37] Lewis lists his most important objections in the summary, Lewis, 1951: 428 - 443, though other examples are scattered throughout the text.

> underlying the folk-urban dichotomy as used by Redfield, is a system of value judgments which contain the old Rousseauan notion of primitive people as noble savages, and the corollary that with civilization has come the fall of man. Again and again in Redfield's writings there emerges the value judgment that folk societies are good and urban societies bad. [Lewis, 1951:435]

It may seem curious to use Redfield's words to disprove what he was trying to demonstrate - that folk or peasant culture will turn inevitably into urban culture, but I think it is effective. What we see in Tremont is the survival of some ways of being that Redfield identified many years ago as peasant or folk ways - whether they applied accurately to Tepoztlan at the point in time at which he studied the village or whether they survived there. The important point is that these values, beliefs and ways of being are different from those associated with urban industrial society - though the lines of demarcation between the two are blurred by agents of rapid acculturation such as movies, television, and the Internet.

Contrast with Contemporary Society

As we have seen, many sociologists and anthropologists have drawn similar distinctions between primitive, peasant and modern industrialized cultures. Jules Henry contrasts traditional culture with that of modern industrial society, which is characterized by expansiveness, competition and achievement.

> Ours is a driven culture. It is driven on by its achievement, competitive, profit ; and mobility drives, and by the drives for security and a higher standard of living. Above all it is driven by expansiveness. Drives like hunger, thirst, sex, and rest arise directly out of the chemistry of the body, whereas expansiveness, competitiveness, achievement, and so on are generated by the culture; still we yield to the latter as we do to hunger and sex. [Henry, 1963:13]

Like Csikszentmihalyi, Henry suggests that these derived needs, generated by the dominant American culture, are decreasingly able to satisfy emotional and intellectual needs. Having more things may be only marginally satisfying at best, and those margins can only fray when the economy fails to offers means to achieve these goals. As Americans have sacrificed the social needs of the primary group for material goods,the American economy has relentlessly moved those fruits of labor further and further across the table until they seem unreachable to many who assumed they would feast if they just worked hard enough.

Henry identifies two characteristics of a technologically "primitive" culture: "Outstanding among the differences between simpler societies and our own is the absence in the latter of what I call production needs complementarity and coincidence of needs with production" (Henry, 1963:8). In the simpler culture "one does not produce what is not needed; and objects are made in the quantity and at the time required." People live with a "fixed bundle of wants" which they can usually satisfy, except in times of famine, pestilence, war and other extreme affliction (Henry, 1963:31).

To some, the psychic and social rewards of a "slower" lifestyle, such as Maine seems to offer in "vacationland: the way life is supposed to be," seem increasingly alluring and they question their aspirations to professional and managerial careers based on long hours away from their families. If we value ourselves based on what we have achieved, we run the risk of de-valuing ourselves when we do not think we have achieved enough. In a *Gemeinschaft* culture based on ascribed status and the performance of relatively stable roles, rewards come to people because of the way they perform, not so much from what they perform. In other words, how someone does a job is critical; the job itself and status attached to that job is of less consequence to the individual and the community.

This, in turn, means that the attraction of a *Gemeinschaft* culture is very strong to those who have experienced the strength of the bonding and interaction within such communities. To someone "from away," the reluctance of Maine students to leave home for college outside of the state or for more lucrative and "important" jobs is strange and just another indicator of rural backwardness. However, to a Maine student, leaving home, extended family, neighbors, community, friends, the land, and associations of a lifetime, is deeply wrenching if not impossible.

Navigating between Two Worlds

John Ogbu thinks the origin of castelike minorities in involuntary migration is a key to understanding their children's difficulties in school. "Castelike minorities are the polar opposite of autonomous minorities. Unlike immigrants, castelike minorities have usually been incorporated into their societies more or less involuntarily and permanently (Ogbu, 1965:170). Members of such minorities experience discrimination so pervasive that it affects their ability to succeed in school as well as many if not all phases of life in their society.

The experience of students in Tremont, Maine, gives us another example of the importance of how one sees oneself in relation to the rest of the culture. However, in Downeast Maine there is a twist on Ogbu's distinction between voluntary and involuntary migrants as the established indigenous culture is being supplanted by in-migration of people "from away").

The question of how students perceive themselves hinges not just on whether they are voluntary or involuntary migrants but whether they see themselves as members of a dominant or subordinate culture. Perception is crucial, as people may be in a numerical majority and yet still perceive of themselves as a minority. One could argue that all children are involuntary migrants or immigrants because they have little power in decisions their parents make. An unfortunate corollary of this supposition is then that all children as members of a discriminated against culture because they have so little power over their own lives.

If students see themselves as members of a second-class culture, they may resist the dominant culture - particularly where that culture most obviously intersects their own - in school. Cummins, reacting to the distinction between illiteracy of oppression and illiteracy of resistance (Wagner, 1991), suggests:

> illiteracy of resistance, although caused by oppression, is to some extent instituted by the minority group itself who, wishing to safeguard its language and culture, and fearing assimilation, turns in on itself and rejects the form of education imposed by the majority group....I prefer to discuss the issues in terms of coercive (and collaborative) relations of power....This orientation also facilitates the examination of how power relations in the broader society get translated into educational failure within the school, and most important, how this process can be resisted and reversed....The negotiation of identity in the

> interactions between educators and students play a central role in the extent to which students are willing to become academically engaged. [Cummins, 1997:415 - 416]

As other researchers have found, the voluntary/involuntary dichotomy seems a place to start analysis of minority success in school, but not to end it (see Van Zantan, Gilborn, Cummins and Navarro, 1997).

Like native-born Mainers in Tremont, the Navajo are a people whose territory and culture has been impacted by in-migration of members of a more dominant culture. Looking briefly at insights into the way in which Navajo students negotiate life between two cultures may help us understand pressures on native students in Tremont. Based on her extensive work with the Navajo, anthropologist Donna Deyhle shows us how difficult it is for Navajo students to break away from their culture and society. She sees her work as an extension of the ideas of Ogbu and Cummins, in the sense that each provided a basis of exploration. She explains that

> cultural difference theorists such as Cummins argue that cultural conflicts and other problems develop in minority classrooms because of the differences between students' home and school cultures. Sociostructural theorists such as Ogbu argue that the explanations for minority school failure lie outside of the school itself, specifically in the racial stratification of US society and the economy. [Deyhle, 1995:406]

Deyhle believes that "Navaho practices and culture represent a distinct and independent tradition," and that though the Navajo do face a castelike minority status in the Anglo society, their culture has an integrity developed independently of white culture over a long period of time. She reads Ogbu as believing "it is possible for the culture of the student to be left 'safely' at home so that his or her cultural identity can be disconnected from what occurs in school." Deyhle and I agree that this is done only with great difficulty and damage (Deyhle, 1995:406 - 409).

The Navajo "are a conquered and colonized people who have successfully resisted assimilation" (Deyhle, 1995:424). Unlike the minorities Ogbu describes, the Navajo enjoyed a long period of independence before being overwhelmed by conquerors, and many (most) still live on land that has great meaning for them.[38] "Indians started with everything and have gradually lost much of what they had to an advancing alien civilization" (Deyhle, 1995:424). For them there is every reason to resist assimilation and work to preserve their cultural heritage.

I see similarity between the Navajo situation and the changes traditional people face in Downeast Maine. Mainers too have had a long time to develop a culture with integrity and meaning. Though the "conquerors" may arrive in sheep's clothing (by L. L. Bean), the wolf lies just under the surface. The conquering takes an economic and political form when outsiders buy the most desirable land and take positions on school or zoning boards, as selectmen, as political representatives, and as members of charitable boards. They may do this out of eagerness to serve and share their expertise, but as they begin to dominate schools and other institutions they profoundly change a way of life.

For the Navajo and natives of Tremont, remaining true to a way of life that has evolved over generations may be the desired goal, whereas Anglos and people "from away" see change as the destination. Non-native teachers may see Navajo and Downeast values as baggage to be discarded along the road to progress and may blame parents for holding students back.

In fact, what Deyhle and others have found is that the more deeply grounded and secure a student is in the native culture, the better he or she may do in school. However, too often native values are disparaged and people in schools find it hard to understand why students remain on the reservation or in Downeast Maine instead of pursuing careers in a city after graduating from college. The answer in both cases is, I think, that life separated from their families, traditions, and what they value means less to native people living in *Gemeinschaft* communities than people from a *Gesellschaft* society can comprehend. To the Navajo, for example, living alone is a form of poverty they would not wish on anyone.

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[38] People in Tremont, like the Navajo, are being displaced by in-migrants. Sometimes it seems the only way to enable young families to afford land in Tremont would be to reserve portions for them. And to continue this comparison, of course, the best land, that which fetches the highest price, would go to those "from away" who can afford to buy it.

Sadly, as students reject assimilation they also may reject "white man's education," and their options after school may be severely limited. Deyhle discusses a cultural war between Anglos and Navajo in which whites maneuver the Navajo into poorly-paid low-skilled jobs, in part by assuring that they are not prepared for anything better. Professional jobs, including teaching, are reserved for whites, which in turn helps perpetuate the status quo. Like the Navajo, the native Mainer may get placed in low track business or vocational courses and be poorly prepared for any but traditional jobs, the skills for which he or she has most likely learned from parents and other relatives. I do not know if this is the case on Mount Desert Island; however, Tremont school has a very high percentage of native-born Mainers teaching in the school, which may be one reason for its relative success. Nor do I know if the island schools have the "homogeneous" responses to native Mainers that Deyhle finds in Anglo dealings with the Navaho. It would be particularly interesting to do a study of native born island students of low socio-economic status to determine how teachers react to them. However, I have, in observation of elementary school classrooms in other island towns, been saddened to see teachers react harshly to children who seemed inattentive, disinterested in the schoolwork, and even at a very young age alienated from what was going on in the class. In all cases that I observed, the students were children of year-round families.

Deyhle begins her article with the comment of a Navaho student who was in the top ten percent of her graduating class and had turned down two scholarships to college. "If I go to college, I will get a job in the city and then I won't come back very often. When am I going to have time to spend with my grandmother learning about my culture?" (Deyhle, 1995:403). Many students from Downeast Maine feel a similar ambivalence about going to college, even when they are unable to articulate the dilemma as a need to learn their culture.

Many students and their families think that becoming educated necessitates going away. What we and the Navajo must convince ourselves and our children of is that there are opportunities at home and that one can have the best of both worlds. In the age of Internet communication, surely this is becoming more feasible. As a Navajo Fire Chief whom Deyhle quotes suggests:

> There is a new life, forward to live in this here dominant culture. This is what I think. Our children need to go out and get the best they can. Go to school and college and get everything they want, and then come back here, to their homes, here between the four sacred mountains....But Navajo parents now have to tell their children to go out and get their education. To college. And graduate school. And then to come back home, where they belong. Here on this land. This is where they belong. They need to bring their education back here to the reservation, their home. Then we can be a whole people. [Deyhle, 1995:423]

This is the same plea we read in Dr. Gordon Donaldson's essay "Growing Up Means Going Away" about students in "Sawyerville, Maine" where he shows that only ten percent of students aspire to leave home to earn a BA or advanced degree and return with their new skills (Donaldson, 1984: 9-12).

Dependency Theory

The lens of dependency theory offers useful insights about the relationship between the rural year-round communities on Mount Desert Island and the tourists and summer people who almost overwhelm the island during the "season." It is, perhaps, no accident that those who establish long-time summer residence are called members of the summer "colony" - or colonists.

Andre Gunder Frank, the "most important popularizer and synthesizer" (Fagerlind and Saha, 1989:23) of dependency theory tells us it is critical to set a stage, to look at the "past economic and social history that gave rise to...present underdevelopment." Without such understanding we fall back on assumptions, thinking that the past and present "resemble earlier stages of the history of the now developed countries" (Frank, 1966:109). If we assumed that a hundred years ago Mount Desert Island was either more dependent than it is today or that more of the land was owned by people from outside the state, our understanding would be seriously flawed.

Frank shows us that "satellites experience their greatest economic development and especially their most classically capitalist industrial development if and when their ties to their metropolis are weakest" (Frank, 1966:114). He posits "a third major hypothesis...derived from the metropolis-satellite structure...that the regions which are the most underdeveloped and feudal-seeming today are the ones which had the closest ties to the metropolis in the past" (Frank, 1966:117). This startling theory suggests that the metropolis robs the satellites of independence, reducing them to dependency, which assures they will be incorporated into the capitalist economic system - to their own detriment.

Fagelind and Saha concur, stating that the "underdevelopment of a region or society is seen as a process which is linked to the development of another region or an outside society" and that there is a "causal relationship between the development of central or metropole societies and the underdevelopment of peripheral or satellite societies..." (Fagerlind and Saha, 1989:22). They link the intellectual origins of dependency theory to Marx because the ideas are rooted in "the process whereby capitalism dominates and exploits the poor countries" (Fagerlind and Saha, 1989:22).

Fagerlind and Saha suggest that the dominant culture will use "blocking mechanisms" to achieve its goals. Certainly the summer community has successfully blocked commercial development of the town they control most tightly, Mount Desert. Fearing the kind of commercialism that now exists in Bar Harbor, summer people convinced the board of selectmen of the Town of Mount Desert not to permit a public swimming pool which would have attracted tourists. Recently the summer colony had enough power to stop cruise ships from visiting the Northeast Harbor, which infuriated local shopkeepers who complained that they have to survive for a whole year on what they make in the summer and that "summer people" may not find the stores open in summer if shopkeepers don't attract enough customers in the brief "season." In Tremont informants told me that summer people "vote with their pocket books."

Another form of "blocking" is usurpation of power. As people from out-of-state move into Tremont, they tend to take over roles on local governing boards, such as boards of selectmen, zoning boards, boards of churches and charitable organizations, and school boards. In the past, these positions went to the most respected local people; however, for example, over the past twenty years representation on school boards in the other three towns went from 100 percent native-born people to 100 percent people who have moved to the island. Only in Tremont do native-born people predominate on the school board; however, as more people move to the town obviously there is increasing likelihood immigrants will outnumber board members who are from Tremont.[39] Though this pattern is not intentionally insidious, the cumulative effect is to severely curtail representation of local people and limit their ability to affect policy.

I cannot here investigate theories of capitalist development in any detail. I intend only that we are mindful that the extraordinary changes we will see in the island economy and its relationship to the larger economy of the state and nation have had profound effect on its people, and their view of themselves and of schooling. Frank sums up what we must look for by suggesting that:

> underdevelopment is not due to the survival of archaic institutions and the existence of capital shortage in regions that have remained isolated from the stream of world history. On the contrary, underdevelopment was and still is generated by the very same historical process which also generated economic development: the development of capitalism itself. [Frank, 1966:113-114.]

We will better understand the relationship of the island's people and economy to the rest of the state and nation, and to the millions of visitors and summer residents, if these assertions underlie our thinking.

Resistance

We find forms of resistance in many subordinate cultures.

> Peasant rebellions are few and far between. Instead, it is more enlightening to understand what can be called everyday forms of peasant resistance: foot dragging, dissimulation,

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[39] See Lawrence, 1995, a paper about the composition of school boards on Mount Desert Island for a discussion of the take-over of positions of authority on boards by people "from away."

> feigned ignorance, false compliance, manipulation, flight , slander, theft, arson, sabotage, and isolated incidents of violence, including murder, passed off as crime. These forms of struggle stop well short of outright collective defiance, a strategy usually suicidal for the weak. [Colburn 1989:ix.]

> The most important fact about poaching is that the activity itself was part of the traditional subsistence routine of the rural population, an activity imbedded in customary rights. Poaching as a crime, therefore, entails less a change of behavior than a shift in the law of property relations. It is the state and its law which suddenly transforms these subsistence routines into everyday forms of resistance. The process, has, of course, been repeated for most colonial societies in which the state redefined the forest ad government property and then imposed a whole series of regulations and officials to enforce them, [Colburn, 1989:9]

All forms of *sub rosa* resistance force those resisting to lead a double life, to follow role behaviors that differ markedly depending on whom they are interacting with. This:

> 'normal' passivity is the slow, silent struggle over crops, rents, labor, and taxes in which submission and stupidity are often no more than a pose - a necessary tactic. This public record of compliance and deference is often only half of the double life that W.E.B. Dubois understood all subordinate groups were obliged to lead. 'Such a double-life with double thoughts, double duties...must give rise to double works and double ideals, and tempt the mind to pretense or revolt, to hypocrisy or radicalism.' [Colburn, 1989:21]

In sum, "such resistance is virtually always a stratagem deployed by a weaker party in thwarting the claims of an institutional or class opponent who dominates the public exercise of power" (Colburn, 1989:23).

There are, of course, ways in which the traditional population of the island resists the impact of outside culture. "Things," such as repairs on cottages, can take a long time. Advice based on local knowledge that might have averted a mishap or problem is not given because "You didn't ask." People pretend to be "going along" when they aren't. Attitudes about poaching provide another example or resistance. From the time Abraham Somes first came to live on Mount Desert Island, until the 1930's when it was banned on the island, deer hunting provided an important source of food and recreation for island people (Meyers, interview).[40] Although deer hunting is now illegal, clearly it goes on, particularly on the "backside" in Tremont and Southwest Harbor. Many local people dislike the policy but have done nothing overt to change it. Instead, they simply hunt illegally, a locally condoned form of resistance.

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[40] Al Meyers, a employee of Acadia National Park, told me that the ban on deer hunting was not tied to establishment of the park. It seems most likely that the ban was imposed as more summer people came to vacation, but I have not confirmed this. Deer hunting is allowed in towns just off the island and throughout Maine, except in areas of the densest population.

Resistance is also found in the reaction of native-born students, particularly those from low SES families, to academic education. Here the consequences are particularly harsh. Without an advanced education, individuals find it very difficult to find jobs and almost impossible to find well-paying jobs that would allow them to compete for the increasingly scarce resource of housing. Unable to find a place to live on the island, many local people, particularly, of course, young families, have to leave.

Though visitors, "summer people," newly arrived professionals, and those, like myself, known as "year-round summer people," would not like to think of ourselves as colonials, we have affected the island in many of the same ways colonists from the "mother country" have traditionally affected Third World people. We are perceived as being more able, better educated and more affluent, all of which gives us great power. Robert Chambers's description of outsiders who visit Third World countries also fits people "from away" who come to Maine.

> We, these outsiders, have much in common. We are relatively well-off, literate, and mostly urban-based. Our children go to good schools. We carry no parasites, expect long life, and eat more than we need. We have been trained and educated. We read books and buy newspapers. People like us live in all the countries of the world, belong to all nationalities, and work in all disciplines and professions. We are a class. [Chambers, 1983:3]

Many transplants to Mount Desert Island, particularly retirees, volunteer to serve on boards of charitable and governmental institutions. We may act out of "public spirit" wanting to contribute experience and resources to our new communities, but too often we impose that experience on local customs and values.

Summary

The bonds of the primary group are critically important to the development of people within that group, to the distribution of values and beliefs, and to the ethos that constitutes a way of life. Breaking away from the support of the primary group is very difficult, and often impossible. But the question should be: Why are people in modern industrialized society asked to break these ties? Why can't we build a society that nurtures the strengths of these groups and makes it possible for students to become well educated and remain in their communities, if that is their choice?

We look next at some of the elements of Maine culture through the lens of literature and interviews to see how people in Tremont define what is important and the ways in which they define the conflicting pressures they face.

Traits and Values in Maine Culture

There are fundamental traits of Maine culture that have developed in response to the culture immigrants brought with them and to the environment and history of Maine. People in Tremont are powerfully affected by this history and environment, as well as by their relationship to tourists and an extraordinarily affluent summer community. The traditional values of family, land, work and conservatism, feelings of inferiority, and reluctance to get ahead mark the "ethos" and define the "good life," the life worth working for.

Yankee society, like all others, was bound by internal and external controls, "the very effective controls of custom and public opinion" (Beam, 1957:167). Passages from Maine literature, journals, and history, as well as data from my interviews and observations, document these traits, values, and patterns. Many of these, such as out-migration to find jobs, have become so entrenched that they have become part of the culture and are important to our understanding of the reasons more Maine students do not go on to post-secondary schooling. And many remind us of the characteristics of peasant culture described by Toennies, Redfield and Foster.

Maine is not merely a place:

> It is the spiritual home and shelter as perfectly fitting and comfortable and natural as its shell is to a snail, which, like snails, they carry with them wherever they may go....Mainiacs away from Maine are truly displaced persons....The people, too, are Maine; the close-mouthed, level-eyed men and women with their horse sense, their bitter humor, their Puritan consciences, and their good old Yankee names....They are a strange and contradictory breed, misfits perhaps in the modern world, but completely at home in the simpler world of their own choosing or making. [Rich, 1964:x]

Rich romanticizes Maine, nevertheless the passage hints that influences from the "modern world" brought in by the most recent immigrants, people "from away," summer people, and tourists may make some Mainers feel out of place in their own state. Maine people treasure their way of life, "the way life should be," as the highway signs and tourist pamphlets proclaim. But selling it to outsiders, subjects this way of life to pressures to change. As more and more people move to Maine, or come to visit, they bring their own ways of being, some of which conflict with local cultural norms and values.

Family:

Maine people, like other rural people, believe in the traditions of family and community. Although in recent years rates of divorce and illegitimate births have risen, the ideal is a strong nuclear and extended family.[41] In Tremont, extended families provide great strength and support to their members; newcomers learn early that everyone is related somehow and that, although family members are not always complimentary about each other, they feel deep bonds of reciprocal rights and responsibilities.

Successful Maine families can be so close and supportive that they provide warm nests their offspring are reluctant to leave, which suggests a parental reluctance to let go of children.[42]

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[41] In 1960 3.2 percent of live births in Maine (5.3 percent in the US) were to single mothers. In 1994 28 percent of live births in Maine were to single mothers (US figure for 1992 is 30.1 percent, 1994 figures not available)(Maine Department of Human Services, Office of Data Research and Vital Statistics, discussion, 9-04-97).

[42] This is particularly noticeable on the outer islands, those further off the coast. Outsiders are amazed by the numbers of people over thirty still living at home and the networks of extended families that often make island society seem impenetrable (Bennett, interview, 1994).

Maine traditional families exist in strong contrast to families in the dominant American society, which have been described as ones "in which kinship structure is weakening in each decade, and in which even the nuclear family provides little psychic strength for its teen-age members" (Panel, 1973:116). The strength of the family may simultaneously promote successful completion of high school and restrain young people from pursuing post-secondary schooling, which we will see more clearly when we discuss education.

Frank Antonucci, who has worked with the Maine Department of Education for many years, notes that Maine's working-class families seem to revolve around "Mumma," much as British families of the same class revolve around "Mum" (Antonucci, Interviews, 1993 -1996). Ludger Duplessis, Admissions Officer at Colby College, noted that too often a student to whom the college had offered a full scholarship, including money for travel, books and even clothing, would turn it down, saying "Mumma says no" (Duplessis, Interviews, 1994, 1995).

Many of the people who have grown up in Tremont have developed amazingly close connections to many members of their families that anchor them in the area. A sister and brother describe the connections they made as children.

> Sister: My first great grandfather died within my first four months, other than that I have known them all....I mean, [my grandfather's] mother I remember, but more so from the memories rather than really remembering. My mom's mom I remember really well, and [my grandmother's] mother who lived to be a hundred and one, she practically baby-sat us. She was a big lady, she didn't move around as much, but [my grandmother] would baby-sit and we would go in and talk to [my great grandmother].
>
> B: Did the older people talk about what it was like when they were growing up?
>
> Brother: Oh yeah, we got that, especially more from my grandfather R. than from my grandfather V., maybe a little bit. It seemed when we were younger we were more with those grandparents than the others...but then that has changed since they died, now we got the one set, so we get quite a bit of stories from that side and from this area...from my Grandfather R. We would get more of knowing just what he did but what the area did because he was born and raised here and he's seen the change.

Another young woman describes her family:

> B: How many relatives do you have in Tremont?
>
> Stacy: All the G's, P's, and R's....I was close to grandmother, spent time with grandparents. We lived in Southwest Harbor, but I went over at least once a week. When we first moved

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> to Tremont, I stayed with them for a few weeks while we got moved, started school, real close to her. I would go there - but she didn't grow up in Tremont. She influenced me about how I treated people, open minded and listened to anyone, didn't gripe.

Connections to members of an extended family can, like roots, be a source of sustenance, or, like the ropes that tied Gulliver to the beach in Lilliput, a form of bondage. The Principal of Tremont School notes: "The children are torn between staying here near their homes and to be near family or to have jobs," a theme to which a young graduate responds, "I had given up. I didn't even want to be in medicine. I loved my junior year. I was really gung ho, but I got a little scared about leaving home. [I was] quite protected, well taken care of at home, [and] afraid of failure."

A group of cousins says:

> Sister: I live about 200 yards from my parents.
>
> Brother: I am building a house, getting much farther away, a quarter of a mile.
>
> B: What are some of the things that you like? What keeps you here?
>
> Cousin: It is a little bit different because I got a little bit of space, but I am still close enough to family. I think that is mostly what kept me in the area, to be with family. If it hadn't been for family, I probably would have moved away, but I didn't, you know, especially growing up in this family. We were close, we were always close, so that more than anything keeps me here.
>
> B: Is that true for you?
>
> Brother: I think so, yeah.
>
> Sister: My first intentions were - out of here.
>
> Brother: She didn't like home - when she was younger.
>
> Sister: It wasn't that I didn't like home, I just thought I wanted something different.
>
> B: What made you change?
>
> Sister: Even when I was in college - the guy I was seeing he was from away and in the summers I would come back here and work and I thought it isn't as bad as I thought, and I think it was the area and having been in different areas. He had a sister in Buffalo and we went there, and his father was in New Jersey, and I had gone to visit my cousin in Dallas. Bass Harbor isn't really too bad.
>
> Brother: We have all been away from here and seen what it is like, it is not like we never left the island.

> Cousin: Florida was pretty nice.
>
> Brother: We went to one of our cousins' graduation in Florida. We've been around, and she had been to Texas, and I have been out of the country...to Ecuador two years ago with my aunt and uncle.
>
> Sister's Husband: You know I was young when I was doing it [moving with family as his father served in the Coast Guard]. I don't want to keep on moving.
>
> Cousin: [Whose father was also in the Coast Guard]. Each base was a place to be for a couple of years 'till it is time to go.
>
> Sister's Husband: All my family is here - I'm only a couple of hundred feet from my mother and her mother. I've always been a Momma's boy anyhow.
>
> Laughter
>
> Sister (his wife): Isn't that true!

A college student talks about the phenomenon in other towns on the island of children's wanting to leave as soon as they can, contrasting that with what he sees in Tremont.

> D: I think [leaving] is a big thing that doesn't hit Tremont as bad, all the kids I know talk about "I've got to leave Maine, I want out of Maine." I don't think that is as big a part of Tremont as it might have been in the other schools.
>
> B: Do you think there are any things that are holding them in Tremont that may be positive things?
>
> D: Well - like I don't believe that college or university is for everyone, and I think it is probably the families.

Another college student has experienced the same thing:

> Friends [from other towns] say they can't wait to get out, don't want to be stuck here. Lots of people here don't want to go to school in the state, which seems unusual....I have noticed through experience that most of the people in New Brunswick [where she has been many times] go to public college, and most people out west stay in their states....But [the University of] Maine is very expensive.

This young woman notes several important points: that the University of Maine is inordinately expensive, that people in the other areas seem to want to stay in-state to get a post-secondary degree, and that her friends from other towns on Mount Desert Island want to leave Maine as soon as possible, whereas students from Tremont seem less anxious to leave the island. She adds that the reason is they want to stay with their families.

Anecdotal and observational evidence suggests that the youth culture that developed in many other parts of American society in the post-war era did not develop as fully in rural communities in Maine. Part of this must be due to the relative lack of separation between children and family, the communion of family members through work in family enterprises, and the fact that children's needs are met primarily from within the family and community.

The Panel on Youth of the President's Science Advisory Committee, chaired by James S. Coleman, concluded in 1973 that:

> What is important about these elements that characterize youth culture is that they have their origins in the relation of youth to the rest of society. Youth are segregated from adults, they are deprived of psychic support from persons of other ages, a psychic support that once came from the family, they are subordinate and powerless in relation to adults, and outsiders to the dominant social institutions. [Panel, 1973:125.]

This characterization seems accurate when applied to urban youth, but does not fit the culture of many rural youth in Maine.

Many Maine children are too important to the running of their family's business to feel alienated. Children were and are responsible for chores with real meaning and consequence for family economy (particularly as they mature and become more skilled). Fathers can't fish if children haven't baited the pockets of traps or whittled the pegs that hold lobster claws closed; if wood isn't split, the house will be cold. Maine children learn from their families how to take responsibility; to deal with the variables of weather and season; to use and fix complicated equipment; to regulate their own schedules. Their labor matters, and adults count on them.

In Tremont, there was even a tradition that at about age five the oldest grandchild might go to live with his grandparents to help them with chores. Though more prevalent when the community relied heavily on farming, the tradition continues (Perkins, Interviews). Children, particularly boys, were expected to work for their families at an early age, which often made it soon as possible, whereas students from Tremont seem less anxious to leave the island. She adds that the reason is they want to stay with their families.

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In Tremont, there was even a tradition that at about age five the oldest grandchild might go to live with his grandparents to help them with chores. Though more prevalent when the community relied heavily on farming, the tradition continues (Perkins, Interviews). Children, particularly boys, were expected to work for their families at an early age, which often made it difficult for them to continue in school. In many ways, children learned what was most important (values and how to make a living) from their close working relationships within their nuclear and extended families, not from their teachers.

It is ironic that the lack of alienation, the "failure" to develop the youth culture as first defined by Kenneth Kenniston in the 1960s, may be both a cause and a result of lower aspirations in some Maine youth. Kenniston identified a 'youth culture' that

> characterizes a growing minority of post-adolescents today...[by] the fact that they have not settled the questions whose answers once defined adulthood: questions of relationship to the existing society; questions of vocation; questions of social role and life style....Far from seeking the adult prerogatives of their parents, they vehemently demand a virtually indefinite prolongation of their nonadult state. [Kenniston, 1971:6-7]

Students who settle the questions of adulthood early run the danger of truncating their schooling and limiting their opportunities.

Migration:

As indicated, the issues of maturing into adulthood are different for rural youth than they are for adolescents growing up in urban communities and set up a conflict urban adolescents do not necessarily confront. Though the pattern of rural migration to cities has begun to change, many Maine people still expect that their children will have to move away to get jobs that pay well. This way of thinking becomes increasingly invalid as well-educated professional people move into the state, create new businesses, or fill high-level jobs. However, fearing that "growing up means going away" continues to color the decisions students and their families make about post-secondary schooling. Donaldson states that rural youth must decide whether to

> remain in the community or leave it...to inherit traditional work of questionable profitability or to move away for more stable and lucrative employment, to slip into the comfortable 'backward' traces of traditional adulthood or to 'step out' into the modern world....While the rural community struggles to maintain itself, the native adolescent struggles to grow up

> without having to sever himself/herself from either the native culture or the grander American scene.
>
> Major theorists depict an adulthood of intimate and fulfilling relationships and productive work as a state which is typically reached though a struggle with and eventual separation from one's childhood community. While the separation is not necessarily geographic for many youth, it practically always must be for rural youth.
>
> A final characteristic of youth's post-high school years was the importance of living in Sawyer to all of them....Youth stated that the familiarity of people, the presences of family, the quiet and beauty of the land, and the sense of ownership and security youth felt within the community made the thought (and in some cases the effort) of living elsewhere futile....Paths leading outward, and perhaps upward, which might appear normal to more cosmopolitan youth were clearly approached with ambivalence by many Sawyer youth. [Emphasis in the original] [Donaldson, 1984:1, 2, 9]

Donaldson's characterization of a mill town in rural Maine captures the dilemma for adolescents from the coastal communities: stay near family and work in limited and limiting jobs, or earn advanced degrees and either move to pursue a career or stay home and not "use" what they have learned in post-secondary schooling.

For many young people, being isolated from the traditional community is too much to bear. In addition, fearing the world beyond their horizon affects the ability of many Tremont families to encourage their children to pursue college or vocational training. Parents must overcome negative feelings about cities and the dominant culture in order to support something they don't want to do anyway: send their children away to an environment that seems threatening. However, a community that does not believe it can retain its young people may anticipate its own end and try to forestall what it thinks inevitable by opposing the 'progress' it fears.

Fear that getting educated means a child will live away from his or her family still haunts the middle-aged and older generation in Tremont.

> B: I have heard people say, "If you got an education, you would have to move away."
>
> Mrs. M.: I have heard that, I have heard that many times.

Migration is still an issue young people must think about and which may influence their thinking about post-secondary schooling. In response to my statement that people have told me if somebody goes on to college they are going to have to leave the island to find work, the Postmistress replied "I have heard it a lot of times but probably it is true, I don't know. I don't know too many kids who have gone on to college in this area."

The dilemma students face is well articulated by the parent of two children, one who did not graduate from high school and works as a fisherman, and one who trained as a nurse and now works in a hospital in Bangor:

> The majority of the students who are at the upper levels, say, who go on to college, who have an impression that they sure as hell can't get a job here, they go somewhere. They go either somewhere else in the state or mostly out of state; consequently, sometimes they come back, but lot of times they stay and it is the career. They retire, and then they come back, sometimes, and they always return, but I think the majority of those kids who go to college probably go out of state to work.

Some young people have planned their schooling as a way to stay near their families.

> Stacy: A lot of the kids of the class who went on to school have not come back, "A" is in NYC, "D" in NY upstate doing biology. I wonder exactly how many people are out of Maine.
>
> B: Did you ever run into the idea that if you got an education you would have to leave?
>
> Stacy: No because I thought I would get a nursing job and stay in Bar Harbor. No, I saw it as a way of being on the island and having a good job, here.

Others have not found a way to combine being a "professional" and remaining close to their family, thinking they must either get an education and move, or give up "careers" and stay near family. A mother discusses her three daughters:

> B: Do any of them talk about going on...going away to school and coming back to the community?
>
> Mother: [Jane] - now, I don't know about the other two. [Jane] wants to live away. [Sharon], she's talking about going on to become a chef, but she is so young. [Jane] says she is going to BU.
>
> B: How do you feel about that?
>
> Mother: That is fine, as long as there is something they really want to do, that is fine.... [Jane] wants to be in business management. There really isn't that much around here, really there isn't, the island doesn't have that much to be in that field. [Melinda] could come back if she got into medicine, but if they want to have a career, they really need to go away. If they want a family, I can see them, mother and homemaker. I can see them sticking around here, but if they want careers where they have been learning stuff, they will have to go away.

Many feel frustrated by what they perceive as limited options and the difficulties of the choice they face. A senior at the high school says:

> I am going out of high school and I don't know where to go. I do not know what to do. I don't want to go in school, I can't stand it....I don't know where to go from here, there is nothing in school. I like business. I am certainly not becoming a mechanic or a woodworker. I can decide that real quick. I like the business stuff and I can't see me doing it. I don't know where to go. I don't know what to do - go on to college yet? I don't like school, I am not a student. I would rather work at MacDonald's the rest of my life, rather than go to school. It scares me.

The feeling of being torn between family and career relates, I think, to the long-term patterns of migration to find work. The irony is, as we have seen, that it is no longer necessary to leave to find professional work.

Good Enough:

"If it was good enough for my grandfather, it is good enough for my grandson" is a recurrent theme in the conversation of parents and grandparents that can be an attempt to curtail change. Alice Miller has shown that we raise our children as we were raised, although sometimes we try to change behaviors we see as negative (Miller, 1990). Regardless, most people pass on at least some of the child-raising "practices" they experienced as children to their own children. As we have seen, in a society with multi-generational families in close association, grand-parents and even great-grandparents can have important influence over the young, which gives children feelings of support and continuity that so many children in modern society lack. But some of the ideas and values inculcated by older people may be out-of-touch with existing conditions and no longer effective. However, as we will see, in the case of Tremont and Maine, these ideas may be surprisingly visionary.

In a society dealing with great economic change and pressure, such as Tremont, resistance to change may have important consequences. One barrier to post-secondary schooling for students in Tremont is that their families do not promote formal education past high school. This is a pattern researchers find in many rural communities: "rural parents felt that schooling was critically important to the lives of their children and the community, but they also thought that the school had 'fulfilled its function when it ha[d] supplied the simplest rudiments of reading, writing, and number' " (Dunne, 1977:89).[43] Rudimentary skills were enough in a culture with rudimentary technology. Today, however, fishing, boat-building, caretaking, working in the woods, and other traditional occupations demand advanced skills in technology, marketing, and management. Some members of the older generation in Tremont have a broader view of the necessity for advanced training, gained when they served in the Armed Forces, on ships, or outside the state in war-related industries; however, their influence is often not strong enough to counter other forces deterring students from continuing their schooling.

'Quite a Worker':

Another strong element in the culture of Tremont and Maine is the work ethic. Yankee society was grounded on the bedrock of an ethic of work. "Work was not for money or for possessions; it was for love, work for work's sake....The Yankee of this time and place was so serious a workman that as a spectator, he tended to identify himself not with the hero, but with substance and techniques" (Beam, 1985:70). People were judged by their ability to work hard, and work itself became ennobling if done well, even a back-breaking task like picking potatoes.

> She moved down her first set of rows like fire through dry brush. The sight of her line of barrels set off within her a small warmth of consolation that helped her maintain the frenzied momentum into the next row. She took a grudging pride in her work. Doing it well, doing it best, was what made it bearable. 'Quite a worker, that April, quite a worker' people had always said, and always said twice as if unable to underscore the fact in any other way, even when she was a kid. 'Quite a worker.' [Fischer, 1989:219]

The culture emphasized that "Economy was tied to work and the lazy were just one step from the poorhouse" (Beam, 1985:164). People found virtue in order, organization, cleanliness, which was "an essential of work, [and] almost excessive regard for time" (Beam, 1985:167).

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[43] Dunne quotes George Herbert Betts, New Ideals in Rural Schools, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1913, pp 25-26.

These virtues are reminders of Puritan asceticism, filtered through Max Weber by Richard Baxter and other Puritan apologists.

> Baxter's principal work is dominated by the continually repeated, often almost passionate preaching of hard, continuous bodily or mental labour....Labour is, on the one hand, an approved ascetic technique, as it always has been in the Western Church....It is in particular the specific defense against all those temptations which Puritanism united under the name of the unclean life, whose role for it was by no means small.
>
> "Work hard in your calling." But the most important thing was that even beyond that labour came to be considered in itself the end of life, ordained as such by God. [Weber, 1958:158 - 159]

That work done well was the goal, not necessarily the nature of the work, nor prestige, power, or money, may have helped people adapt in times of hardship or change, adopting new work when the old failed. It may also be one reason people "from away" and Mainers have had a hard time appreciating each other. Those "from away" tend to honor power and prestige and Mainers have felt insulted when their work is looked down upon and the way in which they do that work goes unappreciated.

The strong work ethic that puts its imprimatur on Maine products is recognized nationally. Members of the Maine Coalition for Excellence in Education have identified this strength and suggest it can impact education: "[T]he work ethic, long a point of pride among Maine's work force, must be coupled with a new education ethic" (Maine Coalition [undated]:6). As mentioned earlier, students in the most homogeneous and poorest town on the island, Tremont, often outperform students from Mount Desert, the most affluent town, and are more successful academically than students from nearby towns that are larger and richer (see Charts Three and Four). Guidance counselors at the regional high school report that Tremont students are the best prepared and work hardest. The principal of the school has stated that the students work hard because they know how difficult it is for their parents to pay taxes - which go primarily for education - and are determined to do their best. Obviously, there are exceptions to this rule, but working hard and doing well in high school is the cultural "ideal."

Real Work:

How people in Tremont and other Mainers define "real work" differs also from mainstream America. In 1989 the Commission on Maine's Future characterized Yankees and traditional Mainers as having a "show me pragmatism," which, coupled with the ability to find practical solutions, should be a strength for creating new products and ways of solving problems. This pattern of thinking values work that can be seen and progress that can be measured, such as construction or fishing, rather than work whose value is less tangible, such as office work or teaching. It values ways of thinking that are concrete rather than abstract.

People in Maine, particularly men, love working out of doors and in some ways do not seem to think that inside work really counts as work. This is deeply ingrained in the culture, and many people, such as ministers and teachers, comment that people seem not to understand that they really "work." Mr. M. is typical: "I decided I didn't want to be a machinist, it was inside work all the time and using machinery and cutting....I wanted to get outside."

People in his children's generation seem to agree:

> Shirley: One of my son's [a painting contractor], I mean he got the business end of the deal and he's got a diploma that he could go to Sugarloaf or any of these places, his was the *outdoor thing*. He could run a motel, hotel, he does all his book work for his fishing. I look at him and I laugh: I made you go to college? I said you know where might you be today? He says, "I'd probably still be fishing." I said well that is a good living and you love it. He has a beautiful and very expensive boat, and he owns a beautiful home, he just redone the whole thing and all his life you know what he wanted for a car? Well this summer he found a Corvette that was within his reach, and he bought it.
>
> [Another of my sons] went to Connecticut and got a job [based] on his diploma and his abilities. He was working towards Manager at J.C. Penny's; he stayed a year and a half, he hated it - he was *inside*. So he went to work for his cousin, who is a paint contractor, and he sees what his cousin was doing moneywise. He come up and he started a business, and 'whoop' it really is taking up - he is doing very well.

Working outside at something practical is more highly valued than working inside, although working with children is also valued, both because of the nature of the work and the fact that it is salaried and secure.[44]

"Real work," men's work, is valued not only because it allows a man to be outside, but because it has tangible, measurable goals and results.

> B: Why do you think some kids don't go on to college, what are some of the things should I be looking at?
>
> Seth: I am not sure exactly about Tremont because I didn't continue like very close friendships, but friends from Northeast Harbor and Trenton, they started to go on because everyone said they should. But it wasn't really there, not really what was important to them. Like one of them is a carpenter on the island. It is just about, I don't know, it is obviously about their goals and aspirations and they can be quite different from the goals and aspirations of other people.
>
> B: What were some of the things they talked about that were important to them?
>
> Seth: School wasn't it, like they cared about knowing how to do things they could do, carpentry, they talked about cars. They are still good friends of mine, but they are more [talking about] necessities, things that are necessities of life, like knowing how to build things, fix things.
>
> B: Very practical sorts of things?
>
> Seth: Yes, good practical upbringing, one of the kids' fathers is a carpenter.

Attitudes about work are an important part of Maine culture and define the way people see themselves and other people.

Self-Denial and Discipline:

Working hard was often coupled with stern self-denial, another legacy of the Puritan tradition discussed by Weber.

> This [Puritan] asceticism turned with all its force against one thing: the spontaneous enjoyment of life and all it had to offer....Impulsive enjoyment of life, which leads away both from work in a calling and from religion, was as such the enemy of rational asceticism. [Weber, 1958:166 -167]

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[44] Note that the Principal, as well as four other teachers, are men who come from the community. Over the fifteen years I have known these men, they have told me several times that they value their jobs because teaching in Tremont allows them to remain in their communities, close to family and friends, and yet is a professional job with security that they enjoy enormously.

This self-denial, seen in saving money and postponement of gratification, is still valued by many people in Tremont, but they worry that the younger generation does not see the need for self-denial, delay in filling immediate desires, or self-discipline.

Self-discipline, the discipline to deny and suppress, which Puritans admired and inculcated, applied to other facets of life as well as work.

> Life was supposed to be full of repressions and inhibitions. It was 'good for them' to repress children. People were proud of breaking the spirit of the young. Girls responded more sensitively to repression, with the result that an inhibited woman ground down to fatal meekness might be admired as refined. [Beam, 1957:91]

Beam notices that "faces [of Maine people] are marked with discipline..." (Beam, 1957:53). "Suffering for the sake of doing right was a commonplace and the gospel of endurance was so extreme that nowadays it might seem masochism" (Beam:1957:171).

In a brilliant image, Beam shows us that this pattern could result in:

> a contrary right-hand instinct, subtle and maddening, which warned him not to let joy go too far, not to let the way become too easy, in fact to accept the hard. In some private wind tunnel of his own, his test was to see how much pressure he could resist. [Beam ,1957:161]

The answer was, a lot. The countervailing force and "chief protection against this strictness, was the affirmative attitude toward love and marriage....Love began with all man's dreams and turned into his stability" (Beam, 1985:171).

Mainers are the archetypal, independent Yankees. Maine people take great pride in being independent, particularly in their work. One indicator is that although Maine is one of the poorest states, with many children entitled to receive free lunch in school, only a low number actually participate. Although over twenty percent of families with students at Mount Desert Island High School are eligible for this program, only about seven percent participate (Superintendent of

Schools, Union 98)[45]. Another indicator is the large percentage of people who are self-employed (Table Thirteen).

Relative Lack of Materialism:

Another trait that sets Mainers at odds with the dominant culture is that they are relatively uninterested in materialism or prestige; they value a way of life that gives them freedom to spend time as they choose. Many are willing to trade the material "advantages" of "the good life" for what they define quite differently as advantageous: a life that affords independence, time with family, hobbies, and being out-of-doors.

In 1994 Dean Cobb and his research team conducted in-depth interviews with twenty-four Maine people from different walks of life, including clam and worm diggers and woodsmen. Cobb was struck by the enjoyment these people took in their own lives and by their peace of mind.[46] Although many lived in economic poverty (by middle-class standards), they valued their independence, ability to make their own decisions, time spent with their families and friends, and time to be outside and pursue various forms of recreation like hunting and fishing. Cobb found that even when financial return was marginal, many Mainers valued their way of life more highly than prestige and status. He was frustrated that many politicians have ignored the importance of the "quality of life" based in traditional Maine culture, an issue that he thinks must be addressed in order to raise the aspirations of Maine students (Cobb, Interview: 1994). It is only recently, and particularly along the coast where Maine people must compete for housing with newcomers from away, that the need to develop "higher" aspirations became evident. However, the lack of a highly skilled workforce makes Maine a less attractive area for investment by businesses that might create highly paid jobs for professional employees.

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[45] High school students everywhere may be reluctant to take low or reduced cost lunch; however, this behavior in Maine is just part of a pattern.

[46] A reporter quotes raker Peter Johnson of Hancock, Maine as saying "I love it, I do it [worm-raking] because you're your own boss out there" (Goodman, 1995:36).

A college student who grew up in Tremont puts it well:

> I never placed any self-worth on the amount of money my parents had, so no one even made fun of me because of the amount of money they had....That again depends on the parents - for me, I have never been capable of feeling inferior because [knowing my own worth as a person] is something my parents made me feel from the beginning, but I could see how someone else could...feel inferior.

This young man moved to Maine when he was very young but displays the trait of not judging peoples' worth, including his own, by the content of their bank accounts. He has more confidence in relation to the world outside Tremont and Maine than many of his classmates at Tremont School, perhaps because he and his parents have lived in other places and chose to move to Tremont. He seems to see the advantages of both worlds and to move easily between them.

Bonds to the Land:

Rural Maine people feel a tremendous bond to the places they know and love. Their sense of stewardship to the land and the continuity of family and history through land are powerful. These motivators, as well as the beauty of nature and a feeling of communion with the natural world on a daily basis are often more important than finding a more highly paid job with greater status that would require leaving the land.

It is hard for people who do not live in the country to understand the depth of love country people have for the land and the solace they derive from communion with the other creatures who share it. Lura Beam tells us of Maine farmers who named large stones and trees on their land, as well as less consequential markers, giving them value and dignity. In this way, "small living things were accepted as the furnishings of the landscape, and talked about as part of farm possessions" (Beam, 1957:30).

"The land was a passion, magical in its influence upon human life. It produced people; nothing else at all, except trees and flowers and vegetable harvests. Life ran back and forth, land into people and people back until land, until both were the same" (Beam, 1957:3). Lura Beam found this relationship so compelling that the last line in one of her books is "Living he was the land" (Beam, 1957:236). These sentiments underscore a feeling of stewardship towards land owned within the family. Until fairly recently, people in Maine have not wanted to give up local property rights to public authorities such as zoning boards or the Department of Environmental Protection.[47] Love of place binds Mainers to their land and state, making it very hard for some to leave, even briefly; love of Tremont, which is extraordinarily beautiful, binds its people as well.

Humor:

Another way Mainers are able to keep balance in their lives is through their humor, which is legendary. Though some of the best known storytellers and wits are actually "from away," they are making public the stories, jokes, and ironic observations of human nature that are a part of the daily conversation of Maine people. Humor, and a sense of the ironic, can be useful shields in a difficult life, used to redress balances when some get too "high and mighty." Tremont historian, Stanley Reed tells the story of Perry Richardson, who owned The Bass Harbor Store in the late 1890s and used his wit to deal with four young visitors.

> Rusticators as we called them - thought they would have some fun with the old fellow when he was gettin' along in years. And they planned to ask him quick questions in sequence before he had a chance to answer the first.
> The first girl says, 'What time does the tide come?'
> The second says, 'What time doe the tide go out?'
> The third says, 'How deep is the pond behind the store?
> And the fourth says: How much are your apples?'
> Ol' P.W. looked at 'em for a minute, and then he says:
> 'In at three
> Out at nine
> Up to your butt
> And four for a dime.'
>
> [The Bar Harbor Times, June 9, 1994:B2]

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[47] In Southwest Harbor, for example, local residents refused to institute zoning laws until an outside developer radically changed the density of the town by building a large condominium project just off the main street. As more people "from away" who better understand the ravages of unrestricted development work for zoning, the irony is that year-round people find it harder to buy property, because as the mandatory size for a lot increases, so, of course, does the price.

In addition, the reader may enjoy the many books of Maine humor by Marshall Dodge, John Gould, Tim Sample, and others.

Eccentricity:

Valuing independence and individuality allows Mainers to accept tolerance of eccentricity and deviance to an unexpected degree. "The feeling for the individual in one's self was so strong that it protected all kind of eccentricities in others. Except in an English village no people could have been more tolerant of variations from the norm." (Beam, 1957:165). "But here, strangeness is more accepted than among people who constantly read other men's ideas and are more closely gripped in the world of machinery...here the isolated families, fighting their separate fights against Fate and the encroaching wilderness, are aware of curious recurrences and accept them" (Coatsworth, 1968:44). The literature abounds with tales of eccentrics, as well as of people from other racial and ethnic backgrounds who, in the 1800s, were accepted at least onto the fringe of society.[48]

Fatalism:

Though traits such as humor, a sense of irony, and acceptance of eccentricity keep balance within Maine's communities, strong elements in the culture narrow its peoples' perspective. Fatalism, for example, may make it difficult for individuals to see the value in post-secondary schooling.

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[48] When I first moved to the island as a year-round resident in 1979, I substituted at the high school for a few weeks. The first day a young man came up to me and started talking about how much he loved to ride on the go-carts at a local amusement park. He kept repeating himself, and my first instinct, which I quickly repressed, was to ask him to be quiet. As I gently steered him to another topic, I realized the other students in the room were watching to see how I would handle this young man, who I had not realized until then was mildly retarded. I was impressed with the protectiveness they clearly felt for him, and was glad that I had gained their approval. I have since been impressed many times by the kindness and acceptance island people offer those who are handicapped.

> Fatalism is sometimes interpreted as a docility that is a trait of national character. Fatalism in the guise of docility is the fruit of an historical and sociological situation, not an essential characteristic of a people's behavior. It almost always is related to the power of destiny or fate or fortune - inevitable forces - or to a distorted view of God. Under the sway of magic and myth, the oppressed (especially the peasants, who are almost submerged in nature) see their suffering, the fruit of exploitation, as the will of God - as if God were the creator of this 'organized disorder.' [Freire, 1993:44]

Fatalism may be the most important barrier to aspiration. If you believe that you violate a law of nature, or of God, by achieving beyond "your place" in society, how can you dare aspire to what is "above" you?

Fatalism describes a fundamental characteristic both of peasant culture and of the local culture of Mount Desert Island: the idea that what will be will be and that there is little we can or should do to effect change. To many people it seems wrong to try to change the way things are and always have been, even when they have so obviously already changed. Many people with whom I have spoken over the years I lived in Maine, and many I interviewed during this research, talk about the power of fatalism to limit options. People tend to identify what they will do in the future in terms of family traditions: if their parents have not gone on to post-secondary schooling, they too will not because it is hard for them to imagine that they can or should, or even to feel that they have a right to aspire that high. People from Tremont can, like villagers elsewhere, feel victimized by the more sophisticated culture of people from the other towns and of people "from away" with whom they come in contact.

Furthermore, victimization throttles ambition by excusing counter-productive behavior. The self-appointed victim can always find an excuse for inaction or inappropriate action that limits his or her effectiveness. But the fear makes him more insulated and fearful and less confident of his ability to deal effectively with the dominant society and its emissaries. Thus, fatalism and victimization may be internalized as paralyzing bitterness and anger against oneself and one's own culture.

One has only to listen to local people talking about the perils of travel to Boston or their self-deprecating humor when comparing themselves to city dwellers to know there are powerful strains of a "peasant" mentality resonant with fatalism and victimization echoing through Mount Desert Island even in the last decade of the twentieth century. A man from the community, who knows it well, says:

> If you live here your whole life, you...by definition you lack some degree of courage, like people..."from away." People "from away" that would say to me, like the people who moved west a long time ago, those people who went to California, that is probably why California is so liberal now. All the people with courage and new ideas moved west and everyone else stayed put. So people who move here from Pennsylvania and are on school committees, and maybe they do that because they do offer something that local natives...and I am one, don't - that they are more courageous. I don't think they necessarily think of themselves as better than natives, I think they have a little more spunk and spirit....A lot of the people around here, to tell the truth, think of themselves as victims.
>
> I think at the risk of making it too simple, after working twenty-two years in this town, that there is an attitude of victimization. In this town, the people who live in this town, lived here a long time, lots of them feel like victims. It is a self-fulfilling prophecy. They feel that way and I would be willing to bet...that a high percentage of those kids who have dropped out are of parents who are born and brought up right here as opposed to the people who have moved here from Pennsylvania and Ohio.

People who think of themselves as victims will have a hard time creating opportunities for themselves or taking advantage of opportunities that are available but not thrust upon them.

We see traces of victimization when people complain that students at the high school from Tremont are not treated fairly, when parents say there is not enough money to pay for college, or when students say there are no opportunities in Tremont for them. Although there certainly is evidence to support these beliefs, people who did not feel that "fate" was against them might have made more effort to change their situation. Some parents have refused to accept that their children don't have opportunities and have radically altered the "fate" of those children by helping them go to college, but they are unusual.

Fear of Debt:

Another trait in the culture that narrows possibilities is a fear of debt and an insistence on thrift that have characterized Mainers for a long time. These may be sensible characteristics in a harsh environment that pushes luxury beyond the reach of most people.[49] However, Maine people can push penny-pinching beyond reason, souring interactions and relationships and limiting opportunity. Many writers describe a thrift bordering on miserliness, pettiness, and cheapness, though ameliorated sometimes by the generosity and kindliness of neighbors and strangers. Dorothea Balano, who sailed with her husband on their schooner, was not a native Mainer. In the log she kept for nineteen years about their journeys, she notes: "The New Englanders don't part from their money too easily, as I noticed at Port Clyde when Fred's mother paid off an errand boy with a half-rotten apple....The worst of it is that when she's around Fred, he is mama's dutiful little boy....Nothing I do or say is acceptable to their conspiracy to beat me down to their penny-pinching show" [Balano, 1989:13,132]. However, later she adds, "Much of what I wrote about his stinginess in the first part of these diaries should be deleted. He has a native generosity which sometimes allows him to overcome his mother's training toward making every penny holler for mercy" (Balano, 1989:158).

Lura Beam adds, "It is impossible to realize the ardor with which the forefathers once tried to be 'saving'....Debt paved the road to ruin, so the game was to calculate what could be saved by doing without...small deprivations were accepted thankfully" (Beam, 1957:161). "Borrowing money was disapproved of, and buying on time - except for houses or land - was unknown" (Beam, 1957:62). Contemporary poet Philip Booth illustrates this concern with debt and the ethic of "making do."

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[49] Obviously debt can be an insidious trap which has ruined many including, for example, farmers in the Midwest who "invested" in expensive machinery at the coaxing of eager bankers, or Eastern land developers.

Eaton's Boatyard

To make do, making a living:
to throw away nothing,
practically nothing, nothing that may
come in handy;
a life given to
how today feels:
to make of what's here
what has to be made
to make do.
[Booth, 1986:205]

Fear of debt has made it difficult for Mainers to invest in post-secondary schooling for their children. Guidance counselors, admissions officers, students, and bank officers have stated that this fiscal conservatism, coupled with lack of other financial resources, is an important factor in the low rate at which Maine students go on to post-secondary schooling (Cassidy, Sargeant: Interviews, January and February, 1994-97). Counselors and bankers have told me that many times students turn down a full-tuition scholarship package because their parents misunderstand and think there will be some obligation to repay all or part of the money.[50] It takes very careful and patient counseling to assure these parents that the colleges want to invest in their offspring. And because Maine is a poor state, families often need such help in sending children to college or post-secondary vocational schools, a situation exacerbated by the problems with the University system which I discuss further.[51]

A bank officer noted a difference between Downeast Maine and Portland, where more people "from away" have changed the cultural mix, and where the percentage of loan applications is higher. A Downeaster herself, and from a very successful family, she admires thrift but thinks one must take on debt to create opportunity; she sees the Downeast reluctance to do so as a real impediment (Sargeant, Interview). Dr. Etta Mooser, professor of education at College of the Atlantic, agrees that the reluctance to take on debt is a critically important barrier to post-secondary education for Maine students. However, Maine is so poor and there are so few high-paying jobs that she wonders if Mainers did incur debt whether they could pay it off. It is impossible to know how many Maine students are kept from post-secondary schooling by lack of financial resources, or to what extent this is merely an excuse not to continue education, but increasing access through scholarships should be beneficial (Mooser, Interviews, 1994 - 96).

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[50] There may well be other reasons parents turn down scholarships, in fact it is the thesis of this dissertation that there are.

[51] In 1990 approximately 10.8 percent of Mainers lived below the poverty level, and 13.2 percent of families with children under eighteen were classified as poor. The per capita income of $12,957 obscures the real depth of poverty in the state, as there is also a relatively large number of very affluent people in Maine (US Department of Commerce, 1990:72). In Hancock County 15.3 percent of children lived below the poverty level in 1990 (Maine Children's Alliance, 1996:26).

Homogeneity:

The homogeneity of the population promotes mutual support, understanding, and neighborliness, but can also devolve into divisive jealousy, gossip, and pettiness. Beam tells us that, "Most of the people of the hamlet lived together so closely the collective feeling was like that of the tribal clan or the British regiment. The average American never gets a chance now to know a population unit so deeply homogeneous. Schisms and feuds made convolutions within the large unity, but everyone knew everyone else: what he did, how he met good and ill" (Beam 1957:51). Such petty divisiveness can undercut the success of community projects, true in any society, but perhaps particularly damaging when small number in the population requires a high percentage of participation to achieve goals.[52]

Mainers have an extraordinary capacity to cut themselves off from each other "to spite themselves." Rich states, "Maine logic leans heavily on precedent and sees nothing odd in cutting off the nose to spite the face. That operation is one of a man's inalienable rights" (Rich, 1964:182). Coatsworth offers the example of a family consisting of a wife, her new husband, and her recently widowed father who has come to live with them.

> When his own wife died, Andrew was left with no woman to take care of him. He turned to his daughter as the next of kin. The fact that he refused to speak to her husband seemed not to alter his rights in any of their eyes. Surely in another part of the country the old man

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[52] Starting the Tremont School Fund was made much more difficult by this pattern.

> would have had to agree to let the causeless feud go before he came under his son-in-law's roof; but not in New England. For thirty years he lived with them, and never to the day of his death addressed a word to his son-in-law. For thirty years his daughter cooked for him, mended his clothes, and set his place at the kitchen table between hers and her husband's. For thirty years the big lobsterman stamped in, pulled off his sea boots, answered his wife's questions, lighted his pipe, and with patience endured the old man's silence. [Coatsworth, 1968:130]

What extraordinary repression and self-discipline this must have required.

Jewett gives us another example. "On a larger island, farther out to sea, my entertaining companion showed me with glee the small houses of two farmers who shared the island between them, and declared that for three generations the people had not spoken to each other even in times of sickness or death or birth" (Jewett, 1981:35). Jewett, in discussing her character Joanna Todd, who retires to live on an otherwise uninhabited island after a failed love affair, states, "I had been reflecting upon a state of society which admitted such personal freedom and a voluntary hermitage" (Jewett, 1981:69).

The small scale of village life lends itself to becoming preoccupied with trivia and gossip. Jewett reminds us that human interaction on the smallest level is grist not only for great writers, but that in a small neighborhood "one bit of news will last...a fortnight ' (Jewett, 1986:77).

> These country neighbors knew their friends' affairs as well as they did their own, but such an audience is never impatient. The repetitions of the best stories are signal events, for ordinary circumstances do not inspire them. Affairs must rise to a certain level before a narration of some great crisis is suggested, and exactly as a city audience is well contented with hearing the plays of Shakespeare over and over again, so each man and woman of experience is permitted to deploy their well-known but always interesting stories upon the rustic stage. [Jewett, 1986:13]

Gossip and negativity erode trust and self-confidence and retard individual and community growth. This is the negative aspect of the insularity Jewett describes when she has Captain Littlepage say, "A community narrows down and grows dreadful ignorant when it is shut up in its own affairs" (Jewett, 1981:20).

Unfortunately, the spitefulness, pettiness and gossip evident in the literature reviewed are familiar to someone who has lived for many years in Maine villages. A recent story from the front page of The Bar Harbor Times makes this point all too clearly:

> Tremont: Reports of vandalism - including slashed tires, a cut gas line on a boat, sand down a gas tank and feces down a well - have come to the selectmen over the past week from residents of Gotts Island....[People] fear reprisals...."It's been like a siege," [a resident] said. "They're childish pranks, but people I've talked to say they're afraid it will happen to them." From his viewpoint, the incidents appear to occur after confrontations between residents disputing land use and renovation on the island. [The Bar Harbor Times, June 19, 1997:A1]

Over the generations, enmities and feuds have undermined projects that might have helped communities and schools as people lose sight of larger goals.[53]

Provincialism and Critical Thinking:

This small-mindedness and insularity have been exacerbated in Downeast Maine by the limited contact the people have with the outside world. Whereas Maine residents once traveled the world in great numbers in pursuit of commerce, or in times of war, now they are likely only to learn about the larger world through the media or the millions of people who visit seasonally. Being a more passive receptor of outside culture than in the past may make the culture more insular, fearful, and self-deprecating than it was when Mainers were actively engaged in enterprises that took them out of the state and abroad.

This lack of a "critical sense," as George Foster called it, can be difficult and frustrating to work with and leads to another pernicious trait of peasant society that one must deal with in effecting change. Although one would expect "a high degree of cooperation among villagers as a defense mechanism" against the outside world, the reverse is more often true. I have seen the lack of critical sense so bog people down in petty concerns and rumors that they do not support worthwhile enterprises that would benefit the island communities and schools. Sometimes the rumors are so outlandish and improbable that an outsider is dumbfounded that anyone could have found them credible.[54]

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[53] Again, I rely on personal experience with the Tremont School Fund and conversations with people from Tremont in making this point.

[54] Unfortunately, I have myself been the object of such rumors. For example, many residents thought my construction company was building an eight unit condominium on a prime site across from a church, where such development was banned. The rumor started because the Victorian

Fear of Success or "Getting Ahead":

In a traditional society, as Foster and Henry suggest, production of goods is balanced against real needs. In modern industrialized society, however, needs are "invented" to satisfy the need of the society to expand production, rather like a pyramid scheme. These "derived needs" must be based on competition between people hoping to increase their status by owning more.

In a traditional society each family is guaranteed what it needs to survive and jealously guards this right to make sure it receives no less. This is critical to understanding Foster's statement that "if someone is seen to get ahead, logically, it can only be at the expense of others in the village....Even if an individual cannot see that he is suffering as a consequence of another's progress, he knows that he must be; the logical premise on which his society is based tells him it has to be so" (Foster, 1962:53). As Maine and Tremont change in reaction to pressures of non-traditional society, people must deal with ways of thinking about success and "getting ahead."[55]

Fear of success is another barrier Mainers have to overcome in order to go on with their schooling. The educated person may be seen by peers and family in negative ways and ostracized or ridiculed for being pretentious, assuming airs, or trying to look better than friends and family. Foster tells us that "the successful person invites the suspicion, the enmity, the gossip, the character assassination, and perhaps the witchcraft and physical attacks of his fellows" which attests to the power of gossip, suspicion and character assassination as a means of social control and barrier to 'getting ahead.' (Foster, 1962:53).[56]

To spare themselves from "enmity and suspicion," and because display of wealth goes against cultural norms, local people rarely display signs of new wealth and avoid promoting

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style house, designed to fit into the neighborhood of large shingle-styled "cottages" for a buyer who had been a long-time summer resident, was so large. The fact that we had had open meetings with the Zoning Board to explain what we were doing and had met all requirements of the local regulations did not deter this rumor.

[55] I want to make it clear that I am not advocating change to a status system based on ownership of goods, just noting that the two cultures are different.

[56] I am reminded by my editor that there exist stories about a witch who threw her dogs off Dog Mountain.

themselves. Even a local contractor who owns millions of dollars of construction equipment and is one of the largest landowners on the island lives in a modest and unassuming house, dresses in green overalls, and drives a truck that would make most successful entrepreneurs cringe.

Summary

We develop not only an individual personality, we also take on a cultural personality. To the extent that the norms and values of the native culture are at odds with the norms and values of the encroaching dominant culture, people living between the two will suffer cognitive dissonance as they cross back and forth between the two. It is as if the two cultures are playing tug of war. The challenge then is to enable students to define their aspirations by integrating what they value in each.

Many programs that attempt to raise aspirations do not adequately take the role of culture into account; programs in Maine are no exception. Maine's culture includes traits such as a strong work ethic, independence, individualism, and strong family values, all of which usually strengthen the commitment to education. However, some traits undermine efforts to increase the number of students continuing their formal education after high school. These traits include: reluctance to assume debt, present-time orientation, and relative disinterest in status symbols, achievement, power, image, and money. In addition, the cluster of traits associated with a "village" outlook, including fatalism, fear of getting ahead, anxiety that educated children will have to move away, poverty, and the need for the children's work, further hobble children's aspirations to further education. Many rural students, many students in Maine, and many students in Tremont are torn between the lure of the dominant culture and the comfort of home.

CHAPTER FOUR

A History of Maine

There are many ways to recount the history of a people, but all are arbitrary. History, like the stories of the people who create it, flows in rivulets which may double back, meander, and plunge before joining. From the confluence of recorded history, it is hard to determine the contribution of each drop of water, but logs, journals, and stories about ordinary people do provide evidence. I will look first at the broad current of Maine history for themes that affected Mount Desert Island, and then at the streams of island history, thinking particularly about the Town of Tremont.

MAINE HISTORY

1607 - 1820: Settlement to Statehood

Colonization of Maine began when Ferdinand Gorges tried to establish a settlement in Sagadahoc in 1607. This attempt to settle what was then called Northern Virginia failed because the sponsors died, not because the location proved inhospitable. Real settlement did not begin until the early 1700s when colonists began to strike out from more populated Massachusetts to find unoccupied land.[57] The fact that the land belonged to native peoples did not seem to bother the settlers, and at first, Native Americans did not understand that allowing whites to use their land meant they were no longer welcome to use it themselves. There was little resistance to settlers because approximately one-third of the indigenous population had died from diseases unintentionally distributed with trade goods throughout the east coast in the early 1600s.

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[57] William Cronon shows that the colonists deforested much of southern New England in a profligate use of trees for fuel, ships and domestic purposes that necessitated expansion into virgin territory (Cronon, 1986).

Also, friction over land use (and between European powers) culminated in the French and Indian Wars of 1675 - 1763, delaying significant colonization: "no habitation was for any length of time safe from the flames, and no person from plunder, captivity or death. In this hazardous situation the people of Maine continued for a long time" (Shain, (b) 1991:54). In fact, the General Court in Boston commanded that Maine function as a frontier buffer zone.

> In a notorious piece of legislation passed on July 1, 1701, entitled 'An Act to Prevent the Deserting of the Frontiers of This Province,' Kittery, York and Wells were included among 21 border towns from which the inhabitants were forbidden to relocate without permission. Failure to obey led to forfeiture of all property or a £10 fine for those who had no property. [Rolde, 1990:71 - 72]

It seems unlikely this heavy-handed law endeared settlers to the Crown.

Though geographically accessible to colonists from settled areas of Massachusetts, the area that became Maine initially attracted few settlers. The danger of living in a buffer zone induced many to wait until cessation of hostilities to move to Maine, and for a long time the rocky, thin soil in Maine was not considered worth farming. However, the population slowly increased as people sought open land, fine trees for masts, and abundant game. In addition, some soldiers who had come to protect the frontier during the French and Indian War or The Revolutionary War received land in Maine in lieu of bonuses, or they remained because land was easily available. In 1772 the population of Maine is estimated to have been only 30,000, but by 1820 it had grown to about 300,000. "The state became a magnet for settlers from the southern New England states, where established communities were becoming overpopulated" (Barringer, 1989:6).

The State of Maine was not created until March 15, 1820, when, paired with Missouri as the free half of the Missouri Compromise, it became the twenty-third state accepted into the union. Unlike Massachusetts, the more democratic Maine did not require voters to own property. From geography alone one would have expected Maine, positioned on the coast, to be incorporated into the union much earlier; however, the turbulence created by its position on the eastern frontier delayed settlement and statehood.

Mount Desert Island: Pre-History to Early Settlement

The horseshoe shape of the island, its pincers almost meeting at the mouth of Somes Sound, led "the Indians [to call] Mt. Desert 'Great Crab Island'" (Wilmerding, 1994:6). As early as 4000 BCE, native peoples may have used the island, and tradition holds that by approximately 1500 CE the Penobscot and Passamaquoddy tribes of Abnaki Indians migrated annually each summer to Mount Desert.[58] Recently, scholars have disputed this, suggesting that plagues transmitted by European traders and fishermen had killed off native Americans along the coast and remnant bands returned there only in summers to exchange trade goods for furs. Fear of disease would explain why they left children and grandparents at home inland. In any case, the Native Americans' concept of land use was very different from the Europeans' idea of ownership and their seasonal use of the island at the time settlers first arrived on Mount Desert may have made it particularly easy for the settlers to "buy" land on the island.[59]

The first European to see the island may have been Estevan Gomes, a Portuguese in service to Spain who explored the Maine coast in 1525 looking for a passage to the Pacific (Morrison, 1960:7; Duncan, 1992:23).[60] Gomes recounted his voyage to people who made maps from his descriptions; however, Samuel Champlain was the first to map and take notes about his explorations (Morrison, 1960:7). Champlain served as a guide and pilot to Sieur de Monts, who held the grant from Henri IV, King of France, to La Cadie, "The Place," a land mass encompassing the entire French claim to North America, specifically the territory from what is now Philadelphia to Montreal. The French, searching for the mythical golden city of Norumbega, had set up a base on the St. Croix River and dispatched Champlain to explore the coast.

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[58] "Abnaki migrated to Mount Desert annually...each summer to live off the local shellfish and wild berries, returning inland for the winter" (Morrison, 1960: 3-6; Wilmerding, 1994:6).

[59] "In a letter dated April 20, 1816, Somes [the first settler] related that firewater was the currency of the times in dealing with the Indians." He paid one gallon of 'occupy' (spirits) for Greenings Island. Eben Sutton paid two quarts for Sutton, though it seems unlikely the sellers had any idea of the implications of what they were doing (Collier, 1978:25).

[60] In 1524 Giovanni Verrazano explored the Maine coast, but it is not clear that he got to Mount Desert Island (Duncan, 1992:22).

Champlain's maps and notes are so meticulous that it is possible to follow his course. Morrison tells us that Champlain first grounded the *patache* on ledges near Otter Cliff, but later sailed into Frenchman Bay. Later he would leave a description of that first encounter: "the island is very high and cleft into seven or eight mountains, all in a line. The summits of most of them are bare of trees, nothing but rock. I named it l'Isle des Monts-deserts" (Morrison, 1960:9).

French interest in Mount Desert culminated in a short-lived colony at Saint Sauveur, now Fernald's Point, disbanded in 1613 when Samuel Argall from the English Virginia Company sailed into Somes Sound on the fourteen-gun "Treasurer" and took the French by surprise (Hill, 1996:20). As they did elsewhere in the New World, the French and English continued to vie for authority, a contest settled only by The French and Indian War in 1763

Governor Winthrop, leader of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, "made the first known sketches of Mount Desert" from The Arbella in June, 1630, but did not land (Morrison, 1960:16). For the next hundred and fifty years, the island served Europeans primarily as a landmark on their voyages between Europe and other areas of the New World.

In 1688 a self-made "gentleman," Antoine Laumet, son of a village lawyer, adopted the title "de La Mothe, Sieur de Cadillac," and created the false coat-of-arms that now graces Cadillac cars. Cadillac obtained the lordship of Douaquet from the Governor of Canada to an area six miles east and west of the Sullivan River, which included l'Isle de Monts Deserts. Although Cadillac and his wife spent a summer on the island, and he made maps and notes, they soon left for Montreal and later ventured west to found Detroit, ultimately traveling to Louisiana, where he became Governor of the French territory.

For the next seventy-five years there was no settlement on the island; however, it was used frequently by both the French and English. Frenchman Bay was so named because it served as "the staging point for warships preparing to fight the English," while the English used the area between the Cranberry Isles and Mount Desert in the same way. Man O' War Brook, which flows off Acadia and St. Sauveur Mountains, was so named "because English warships used to fill their water casks where the stream tumbles over granite ledges into Somes Sound" (Morrison, 1960:20).

At the end of the French and Indian War, New Englanders began to settle the eastern area of Massachusetts in earnest, though "the region between Penobscot and Schoodic was thought to be 'a wasteland'" (Hill, 1996:17). Settlers were attracted by available land, fine stands of trees for lumber, and salt-hay, even though, as Rufus Putnam noted in 1790, "that country in general is not fit for cultivation and when this idea is connected to the climate, a man ought to consider himself curst even while in this world who is doomed to inhabit there as a cultivator of lands only..." (Hill, 1996:17).

Sir Francis Bernard, the last colonial Governor of Massachusetts, managed to gain a grant to Mount Desert Island, which he coveted for its potential in real estate development (he had ten children). In addition, he was compelled by the fact that in order for a gentleman from the Bay Colony to be considered important it was necessary that he own large tracts of land, which was becoming prohibitively expensive in or even near Boston. The open land of Down East Maine attracted settlers and investors who only wished to own and rent, not work, their land (Collier, 1978:23).

Bernard gained approval of his grant in 1764, but two years earlier he had persuaded Abraham Somes and James Richardson to found a settlement on Mount Desert. Somes and Eben Sutton had visited the island in 1755, when Somes bought Greenings Island for a gallon of rum and Sutton bought what would become Sutton Island for two quarts, but they were reluctant to settle with their families before cessation of hostilities with the French and Indians. Bernard visited Mount Desert in 1762 and gave Somes and Richardson birchbark deeds to the land they occupied; however, he could not implement his plans for greater development before the colonists in Boston forced him to return to England.

At the end of The War of Independence, two people claimed title to Mount Desert. Governor Bernard's son John, who had joined the colonists, petitioned the court of Massachusetts to return his father's land to him as the rightful heir, but his claim was contested by Madame Barthelmy Gregoire, grand-daughter of Sieur de Cadillac. Because she presented letters of introduction from Lafayette, who had befriended the struggling nation, the court naturalized her in 1787 and divided the island along Somes Sound, granting Madame Gregoire the eastern portion and John Bernard the western side of Somes Sound (Morrison, 1960:24-28). In 1789 the island was incorporated as the town of Mount Desert. Tremont, originally called Mansell and including land now part of Southwest Harbor, was not incorporated as a named town until 1848. In 1905 Tremont separated from Southwest Harbor over a dispute about location of the high school within the town of Southwest Harbor and became a separate, incorporated town (TCP, 1997: K-1).

Mount Desert Island: Settlement to Statehood

The beauty of the landscape and the availability of land were not the most important lures that drew Abraham Somes to settle at the head of the natural fjord later called Somes Sound: "The settlers needed protected harbors for their boats; sheltered, sunny house sites; wild marsh hay for animal fodder; good land for farming; fresh drinking water; streams that could support mills; and forests worth logging" (Hill, 1996:19). The land around the head of protected Somes Sound was an ideal place to harvest trees and locate a homestead. The virgin forests provided a rich source of pine and the marshes offered salt hay, a nutritious feed for animals.[61]

The island was officially under the aegis of Governor Bernard, but settlers were left undisturbed as the "agitations" in Boston dominated the governor's attention. By 1764, nineteen other families had joined Somes, all "settled under no Authority at all," though Governor Bernard did not think there were "above one hundred fifty families in all the townships of Maine." By 1776 "there were between 75 and 100 men on Mount Desert Island alone" (Sanderson, 1982:47).

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[61] Settlers originally favored the western side of the island because it was closer to coastal vessels, but were drawn increasingly to the more fertile eastern shore where they could raise cattle more easily (Collier, 1978: 26). In 1768 "the Inhabitants of Mount Desert" petitioned Governor Bernard to protect their salt hay from incursions by settlers from other townships: "We the inhabitants of mount desart Humbly Craves your Excelency's Proteccon against the In-Crossing of the Naboring inhabents made upon us Consarning hay for we cannot git hay on ye island for the keep our Stoks, other People Cut the hay before it gits its Groth so that they Spoil the marsh & if we Cut and haystack it for Sleding it is Stole so that we cannot have ye Provilige of the marsh that we have Cleared Rode too, there fore we bege that your Exelency will consider us & put a stop to this Incrossins, otherways we Shall Not be Able to keepe our Stocks & the marsh will be totely Spiled" (Hill, 1996:31 from Eben Hamor's report on the families of Eden, courtesy of Jesup Library).

Mount Desert Island: Statehood to the Civil War

In the early 1800s, enormous changes created a new type of life on Mount Desert Island and in other coastal communities. No longer was the coast a frontier. By 1836, Somesville was the economic center of the island, boasting:

> a saw mill, a shingle mill, a lathe mill, a grist mill, a woolen mill, a tan-yard, a bark mill, a shoe-maker's shop, two ship yards, two blacksmith shops, two stores...." By 1870, there had been added a stave mill which provided material for barrels and casks into which dried, smoked and salted alewives, cod and herring were packed for shipment to Boston in one of the Somes schooners. Smoke houses along the shore had multiplied.... [Somes Sanderson, 1982:185]

By 1870 there were, in addition, three more shipyards, a stave mill for making barrels, several smoke houses for salting fish, two more blacksmith shops, a harness and upholstery shop, a tin shop, dressmaker's shop, a factory producing pants, and The Mount Desert Japan Manufacturing Factory in which people used a hard black lacquer to decorate pieces of porcelain (Somes Sanderson, 1982:186).[62]

However, Tremont was also a busy center of population and industry:

> The town of Tremont, which then included Southwest Harbor, had a population of 1800 in 1871. Among them were six ship contractors, five boatbuilders, three master and thirteen plain ship carpenters, four ship joiners, eight calkers and gravers, one sailmaker and one rigger. These were the professionals; but it is safe to say that almost every man could lend a hand at hewing out ship timber. [Morrison, 1960:34]

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[62] At the present time Somesville offers a garage with a small grocery, a book store, an insurance office, a small antique auto business, a real estate office, an oil storage facility, and an antique store that is open only in the summer. In addition, some people rent cottages and there is a canoe rental facility. Today a great deal of the land is owned by people "from away" who are there only seasonally and the economy is largely dependent on tourism and summer visitors.

Many residents of the island were subsistence farmers like John Carroll and his family, who settled on land near Southwest Harbor, creating a homestead they called 'The Mountain House.' Carroll had emigrated to Newfoundland from Ireland on May 24, 1814, but headed south to work as a mason in the rebuilding of Washington, DC after the British burned it during the War of 1812. He was exchanged for a coastal pilot and went with the ship's captain to Mount Desert Island, where he stayed and married (Raup, 1993:8).

Like Abraham Somes, John Carroll built his house with tools he made, cleared his land, and dug his well. The degree of self-sufficiency the Carrolls and other subsistence farmers achieved is amazing, and even more extraordinary when one realizes that the men were often away from home for long periods of time working on ships and construction. Often women accomplished even the heavy work demanded on a farm. 'Mountain House'

> was one of thousands Maine Coast subsistence farms, depending upon its own resources for most of the family's needs. At the same time, Maine Coast farmers combined agriculture with other economic activities, often fishing or logging, that provided income during the off season. The Carrolls, too, found it necessary to seek work off the homestead, but unlike countless other Mainers they did not take up fishing or seafaring careers. Although the Carroll property extended to saltwater at Norwood Cove, only one of the Carroll men - Jacob - followed a life at sea. The Carrolls, instead, augmented their farming with money earned as masons. [Raup, 1993:4]

Lura Beam describes her grandparents, who also fit this mold.

> Both represented well the pioneer Englishmen who had settled the Maine area....They now seem to me to have been stubbornly British in character and temperament, like figures out of Thomas Hardy....They were the eighth generation from the first English ancestor who came to Massachusetts, and the fourth from the first settled in this Maine spot. They still lived on the original land grant given the settlement by the English Crown. His revolutionary ancestors were buried five doors away, and hers in a neighboring hamlet.
>
> They had the taste of the past in their mouths. They lived by the weather, by whatever came, and by what they would do with the whole body. They spanned the period 1828-1914, the last couple in the family to touch this rural, American life in its undiluted form. All their children migrated and became urban. [Beam, 1957:4]

Beam's grandparents, like the Carroll's, saw enormous changes in Maine, from economic expansion to initial retraction into a service economy and insularity.

Maine: A Frontier State of Mind

We can trace themes in Maine culture that affect the education of its children to its history and to the predominantly "Yankee" origins of its people, 70.6 percent of whom, even today, were born within the state. As Frederick Jackson Turner showed in "The Frontier in American History" the history of Maine was created in relative isolation as the area was as much a frontier for the East as the western states were. Frederick Jackson Turner showed that the frontier was a critical forge of American character and identified the frontier as "the outer edge of the wave - the meeting point between savagery and civilization" (Turner, 1967:3).

A summer resident of Hancock Point, near Mount Desert Island, Turner argued that Maine was the last frontier in the east and created in its people a unique culture and way of life. "That long blood-stained line of the eastern frontier which skirted the Maine coast was of great importance, for it imparted a western tone to the life and characteristics of the Maine people which endures" (Turner, 1967:52 - 53).

Turner saw Maine as part of the traditional frontier, although geographically it was an exception.

> That this movement of expansion had been chiefly from south to north, along the river valleys, should not conceal from us the fact that it was in essential characteristics a Western movement, especially in the social traits that were developing. Even the men who lived in the long line of settlements on the Maine coast, under frontier conditions, and remote from the older centers of New England, developed traits and a democratic spirit that relate them closely to the Westerners, in spite of the fact that Maine is "down east" by preeminence. [Turner, 1967:79]

Traces of the character Turner saw in 1920 remain today, though little remains of the actual frontier. "The Maine frontier closed officially when public lands sold out to private interests, primarily the paper companies" (Barringer, 1989:7). However, large tracts still offered seemingly limitless land relatively unfettered by the impact of authority.

Turner stated that "the frontier promoted the formation of a composite nationality for the American people. The coast was preponderantly English, but the later tides of continental immigration flowed across to the free lands....In the crucible of the frontier the immigrants were

Americanized" (Turner, 1967:22). In Maine this process further homogenized people from similar origins, which may help explain why traditional Mainers are still so similar in outlook and ethnicity.

The frontier represented a "simpler" way of life, one that attracted travelers such as Henry David Thoreau, who understood the rigors of life in Maine only dimly. In much of the writing about Maine, particularly after the period of "rustification" in the late 1880s (perhaps not coincidentally the period in which Frederick Turner saw the American frontier closing), we find hints of the nostalgia that still clouds the visitor's view of Maine.

Nostalgia is prevalent in Maine literature, particularly that written by visitors, or in advertisements "selling" Maine to tourists.

> In identifying the impact of frontier consciousness upon the development of Maine literature, [Henry] Beston writes that "those who would understand the particular quality of Maine must first, perhaps, take thought of these elements of the frontier." The frontier, of course, refers not only to the geographical wilderness which confronted the first Maine settlers and authors, but also to a state of mind. The frontier was a metaphor that encompassed vision of human potential thriving in pristine woodlands. These surroundings, it was thought, would return man both to nature and to a pastoral state of innocence. From literary perspective the frontier metaphor evokes a string of connections which transcend the local and particular: the early Maine writers were not alone in equating the New World with promise, paradise, Utopia, or kingdoms teeming with evidence of the divine. [Lecker, 1982:xvii]

We see echoes of this theme in both fiction and non-fiction as the mystique of Maine endures. Maine continues to trade on these myths, attracting many visitors and summer residents who want to buy utopia, even if only for a week.

Three Frontiers

After the end of the French and Indian Wars, and until steam forced sailing ships out of the race for cargo in exotic ports, Maine had three frontiers: the northern woods, the outer islands, and the ocean. Each venue challenged its people in ways that life in settled towns and cities did not, and each helped form the distinctive culture of Maine. Let us look briefly at life in the mid-1800's in these three environments.

The Woods:

Scholars have suggested that the vast expanse of woods in Maine was a forge for Yankee character.

> It may be argued, persuasively I believe, that the Maine woods are the very touchstone of the Maine character itself. Since the first European settlement, Maine residents have lived in a powerful relationship with these woods, which have provided physical, emotional, and spiritual sustenance to individuals, families, and communities alike. [Barringer, 1989:113]
>
> Many of the distinctive qualities of the Yankee temperament can be accounted for only by the proximity of the forest - of a feeling, unconscious but deep, of the presence of nature. [Pike, 1984:275]

The deep, untouched woods challenged Yankee ingenuity and fostered independence and an abiding love of, even reverence for, nature.

Timber resources were an essential attraction to settlers of Maine, and lumbering began immediately. "It was the quest for lumber [particularly for masts] that colonized Maine..." (Pike, 1984:49).

> The strength of England, the mother-country, depended on its navy, and the British Admiralty quickly appreciated the potentialities of the American colonies as sources of supplies for ship construction, particularly spars and masts. [Pike, 1984:44]

Lumbering drew men to the colonies and later, as prime trees were depleted, drew them west.

As there were few trees suitable for masts in largely deforested England, the Crown protected those it controlled in the colonies.

> The Royal Government took measures to conserve these resources for itself as early as 1691, in the Province of Massachusetts Bay, where it was forbidden to cut any pine over twenty-four inches in diameter, except on privately owned land. Successive acts, up to 1729, prohibited, under penalty of a fine of fifty pounds sterling per tree, the cutting of any kind of pine tree anywhere in New England and in New York, except on private land. [Pike, 1984:44]

This was less of a burden on the colonists than might have been imagined, as the Crown appointed only five Surveyors to mark the King's trees in the millions of acres of forests in British North America. In addition, these surveyors were charged with monitoring illegal cutting, training colonists in "the proper way of preparing pitch and tar for the use of the Royal Navy," and encouraging the growing of hemp (Pike, 1984:45). Nevertheless, one Surveyor-General, John Bridger, was recalled for having

> done his duty too vigorously....But despite his energy and zeal he realized that his task was well-nigh impossible. He reported that of seventy great pines marked at Exeter, New Hampshire, all but one had been illegally cut and hauled away, leaving no trace. No settler seemed to know anything about the matter. It was the same elsewhere. 'These frontier people depend on the woods for their livelihood,' Bridger wrote; 'they say the King has no woods here, hence they will cut what and where they please.' [Pike, 1984:45]

Sometimes this attitude of independence resulted in wanton destruction. "Knowing that fire would spoil white-pine trees for masts, but would still leave them a good deal of salvageable lumber," backwoodsmen set fires in New Hampshire and Maine (Pike, 1984:51).

Lumber, of course, provided the raw material for shipbuilding, which, in turn, encouraged more lumbering. Maine logging was so profitable a business that it attracted men from other states and from the Maritime provinces of Canada. All the lumberjacks lived a life of isolation, independence, self-reliance, and hard work, though this was often made enjoyable by the camaraderie and humor of camp life and the opportunity to be out of doors.

Lumbering was always moving farther away as good trees were used up. As the supply of great pines dwindled in the Maine forests, some of the loggers followed the industry west until there were Mainers in many of the western states. The record of their emigration is marked by the towns they named after Bangor, Maine, the preeminent logging town. Following logging may have helped establish a pattern of out-migration that still affects the education of children in Maine, a pattern so important we will look at it in depth later.

The vast expanses of the Maine woods also drew sportsmen and naturalists like Thoreau and James Russell Lowell, who admired life in the lumbering camps.

> It was plain that there a man would soon find out how much alive he was, - there he could learn to estimate his quality, weighed in the nicest self-adjusting balance. The best arm at

> the axe or the paddle, the surest eye for a road or for the weak point of a *jam*, the steadiest foot upon the squirming log, the most persuasive voice to the tugging oxen, - all these things are rapidly settled, and so an aristocracy is evolved from this democracy of the woods, for good old mother Nature speaks Saxon still, and with her either Canning or Kenning means King. [Lowell, 1877:31]

The woods may also have helped create a way of life in service to outsiders that has had a deep affect on the way Maine people think about themselves and the way their children think about their futures. The Maine guides were in an ambiguous position, being both in charge of the hunting and fishing parties and in cleaning up after them. But at least these visitors offered the woodsmen sport as targets for their humor.

> To prove themselves that they are no man's lackeys, the guides warn their sports against side-hill badgers, imaginary beasts of tremendous ferocity whose legs through a lifetime of walking on the sides of hills are of vastly different lengths, and against giant dragonflies that will sew up the lips of the unwary. They say that the wind streaks on a lake are tracks left by sledges crossing the ice during the previous winters and that quills can be thrown long distances by porcupines and will, once they hit their mark, inevitably work their way to the heart, with fatal consequence; and any other ridiculous thing that occurs to them. Thus they establish to their own satisfaction the independence of mind and spirit necessary to any Down-easter. [Rich, 1964:xiv]

Humor helped the guides preserve a sense of dignity, but the "hidden injuries" of servitude are another theme to which we will return.[63] The Maine woods still offer a real challenge to those who work or visit; they stand as the closest approximation in the east to a wilderness frontier.

The Islands:

Islands are by definition insular. This insularity can be a protective cover, preserving valued traditions, but it also retains social inversions that might be better dissipated by the fresh air of outside influence. Coatsworth remarks, "island people almost always develop very definite characteristics, occasionally bad but usually good. They are old-fashioned; the sea protects them from the flood of formlessness which washes across our towns and cities; they are franker, more individualistic..." (Coatsworth, 1968:145).

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[63] I am alluding here to Richard Sennett and Jonathan Cobb's book "The Hidden Injuries of Class."

Ruth Moore, who lived part of her life in Tremont, wrote a fictional account of island life that highlights this duality.

> 'I'm sick of this goddam hole of an island!' Leonard burst out.' Blasted backbiters and gossips, they'd say anything just so it was behind your back!'....'Over on the island, it's well, they kind of huddle away from each other, like it was every man for himself. I never could see much sense in it, where we was always all neighbors....Oh, if somethin turns up, like trouble on the water, everybody chips in and lends a hand, the way they used to.' [Moore, 1986:296, 341]

On Maine islands, as in other rural areas, this is an important duality. Though perhaps most pronounced on islands, where society is so clearly circumscribed, the tension between mutual support and petty recrimination, the result of long-term and very close associations, characterizes rural Maine society.

Islands distill elements of Maine character. Virginia Coatsworth notes, "one of the outstanding features of pioneer life was and is its frequent isolation. I know of two cases myself where a family has been marooned without its men and faced starvation waiting for their return. One case was on lonely Matinicus Rock" (Coatsworth, 1968; 118). Such isolation could have severe consequences, as Mary Ellen Chase, author of Silas Crockett indicates:

> We knew of outlying islands beset with starvation in an especially bitter winter, of mailboats foundered at sea. Is it too much then to believe that there crept into our minds earlier than into the minds of most children a sense of the inevitability, not only of suffering but of endurance as well, that we grew, perhaps unconsciously and insensibly to look upon sorrow not as an individual, concrete matter but rather as a mighty abstraction, necessary and common to all human life? An easier, more fortified age may well question such an assumption; but few who were born to a seafaring heritage and few who knew coast life even a quarter century ago will, I doubt it. [Shain, 1991a:160]

A glimpse of the life of John and Hannah Gilley, who lived on Baker's Island off the coast of Mount Desert Island, gives insight into what life was like on the islands. They did not have to buy the island from anyone or from a jurisdiction, but creating their homestead required effort and tenacity. Hannah Gilley had a tolerance for "formidable isolation which was absolute for considerable periods of the year" (Eliot, 1989:13). In good weather she could row seven miles to Southwest Harbor, but in winter and in bad weather she was bound to the island. Hannah, who had been to school in Massachusetts, was able to teach her children (twelve eventually) to read, write and cipher; and "all her life she valued good reading and encouraged it in her family" (Eliot, 1898:12).

Like other pioneer families, "this Gilley family on its island domain was much more self-contained and independent than any ordinary family is today....They got their fuel, food, and clothing as products of their own skill and labor, their supplies and resources being almost all derived from the sea and from their own fields and woods" (Eliot, 1989:19). Food was abundant - lobsters, for instance, could be picked up along the shore. They raised sheep and grew flax, using the wool for clothing and household items and the linen primarily for towels. One brother learned to make shoes for use in winter. They shot birds for feathers that they sold to a coaster headed for the Boston market; eggs and butter they sold directly to families on Mount Desert Island.

As Eliot notes, island life can benefit those who endure its demands:

> The youth who learns to wring safety and success out of such adverse conditions has been taught by these struggles with nature to be vigilant, patient, self-reliant, and brave. In these temperate regions the adverse forces of nature are not, as they sometimes are in the tropics, irresistible and overwhelming. They can be resisted and overcome by man; and so they develop in successive generations some of the best human qualities. [Eliot, 1993:20]

Those who live through Maine winters now might be surprised to think of the tropics as having adverse conditions, but certainly island life inculcated the virtues Eliot praises.

Sailing: 1850 - 1880:

The influence of the sea on the people of Maine, particularly, of course, on those who live near it, is inestimable. The rich fishing areas of the Georges Bank and the Gulf of Maine had originally drawn fishermen from Europe before colonization and continued to provide a living for many Maine families. Fishermen, like their western peers, the cowboys, and the "cow-men" of upstate New York, defined a general culture though their numbers were surprisingly small.[64] The men and their families shared the characteristics of courage, independence, and the ability to deal with physical hardship and a rigorous life out-of-doors. Shipping and ground-fishing, in contrast to lobster fishing, also required that men were away for long periods of time and gave them opportunities to see distant places and peoples.

Shipping was central to the economy of Maine. "Maine, in 1855, was the ship building capital of the United States, accountable for 215,904 tons" (Rolde, 1990: 192). "By 1855 Maine was building 388 vessels, 35 percent of the total United States production" (Duncan, 1992:290); however, within four years this had fallen off 80 percent, due in part to the "financial panic and depression of 1859" (Barringer, 1989:7) and the increasing difficulties of trading in the Caribbean and southern states. Maine shipbuilders adapted to the needs of the times, constructing fishing vessels, Clippers, coasters, and Downeasters, as demand dictated. However, the most remarkable development in the economy of Maine may have been the China trade:

> In 1784, Captain John Greene sailed the *Empress of China* from New York on the first direct voyage ever made by an American ship to Canton....Captain Greene came home with a rich cargo, which he sold at such tremendous profit that all shipowners, including those of Maine, at once determined to go and do likewise. Thus began a fabulous period in the history of Maine shipping, the glamourous era of the China trade....
>
> The first of the Maine ships [to make this trip] was the *Portland*...[which] sailed for the Orient in 1786 with a cargo of beef, salt cod, pickled salmon, barrel staves and shugar. The invoice of her return cargo is fascinating, if a little baffling. It includes, along with comprehensible articles like bandanna handkerchiefs, items with such wonderful names as Beerboom Gurrahs, fine and coarse Policates, Allabad blue and Chitabudy Baftas. [Rich, 1964:128].

The trade on other routes closer to home was more prosaic:

> John Gilley's coasting schooner The Preference carried paving stones from Cranberry Island to Boston, and porgy oil, a substitute for linseed oil unavailable during the Civil War. [Eliot, 1989:22]

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[64] See Janet Fichten's Endangered Spaces, Enduring Places, for discussion of the mythic role of "cow-men" in upstate New York.

Trade with the Caribbean in sugar, molasses and rum, in exchange for Maine products such as *fish, lumber*, vegetables, livestock, and ice was always more important to Maine than trade with the Orient.

In the mid-1800s Maine ships tended to be smaller than the more heralded Clippers. Outfitting a clipper almost required that she sail from a larger port like Boston, where cargoes could be collected and there was deeper draft. However, the smaller schooners and downeasters filled an important niche and "the profits gained were usually well worth the threat of dangers, trials, and tribulations. One had to be something of a gambler, facing the challenge of the sea and accepting losses philosophically" (Somes-Sanderson, 1982:217).

Many Maine men went to sea; sometimes whole families went to sea. I have been told, but cannot confirm, that Maine was the only state in which wives, and sometimes children, accompanied captains and other officers. For example, Dorothea Balano sailed with her husband for nineteen years, raising a family while traveling throughout the Caribbean and to Europe.

Wives who did not accompany their husbands carried the entire burden of running homes, and sometimes businesses, while their men were at sea, giving the women independence and confidence unknown to those whose husbands were always home. However, for families the stress of waiting, sometimes for years, was enormous. "When he was away on a voyage, life for her [Grandmother Elmira] was an agony of anxiety and waiting. Like all wives of seafaring men, whenever she thought it time for him to come sailing home she spent hours standing in a doorway, waiting and watching, gazing seaward through a long spyglass" (Earl, 1993:18). Many did not come home again.

Travel to countries and cultures outside Maine opened windows to ideas not only for those who made the journeys, but also to the people with whom they came in contact when they returned. The greatest value of shipping may have been the effect it had on the imagination of Maine people. In her superb story "The Queen's Twin," written in the late 1890s, Sarah Orne Jewett tells us:

> the coast of Maine was in former years brought so near to foreign shores by its busy fleet of ships that among the older men and women one still finds a surprising proportion of travelers...they were among the last of the Northmen's children to go adventuring to unknown shores. More than this one cannot give to a young State for its enlightenment; the sea captains and the captains' wives of Maine knew something of the wide world, and never mistook their native parishes for the whole instead of a part thereof. [Jewett, 1981:189 -190]

Jacob Carroll, a ship's captain, described "the places he had visited and the sights of London, Amsterdam, Paris, Le Havre, and Cadiz; he also visited Calloa (Peru), Rio de Janeiro, Calcutta, Bombay and many other ports. During his sailing days, he crossed the Atlantic five times and went around the world once" (Raup, 1993:35). Dorothea Balano husband's grandfather established a base on Hupper's Island, near Portland, from which to "send...forth scores of vessels, captained by his sons and sons-in-law, to the West Indies, South America, Africa, and Europe, for gold and glory" (Balano, 1979:53).

Captains brought back stories and descriptions of other cultures and countries, as well as trinkets, fine porcelains, silks and other luxuries for their families as well as for trade. Captain Jacob Carroll "returned from his voyages with cotton and other cloth, and with clothing for the family. He brought back the cloth for Rebecca's wedding gown, as well as more exotic items - a white silk shawl, and blue and gold Turkish slippers from Constantinople" (Raup, 1993:28). Carroll was at sea for thirty-six years, during which he spent three years on a voyage to Australia and rounded Cape Horn and the Cape of Good Hope. "As was common along the Maine coast, these overseas journeys introduced exotic cultures to the Mountain House [Carroll Homestead]. Jacob brought back, too, stories of adventure and daring that kept his children and grandchildren entranced" (Raup, 1993:28, 35).

In her story, "The Country of Pointed Firs," Jewett shows us the effect this had on the culture of Maine in the early 1800's when old Captain Littlepage reports:

> It was a dog's life, but it made men of those who followed it....In the old days a good part o"the best men here knew a hundred ports and something of the way folks lived in them. They saw the world for themselves and like's not their wives and children saw it with them....They were acquainted with foreign lands and their laws, and could see outside the battle for town clerk here in Dunnet. They got some sense of proportion. They lived more dignified. Shipping's a terrible loss to this part o' New England from a social point of view. [Jewett, 1981:20]

This sense of proportion vanishes when the world contracts to a village.

Sailing to distant ports offered an different kind of education.

> Although education on the Island, to 1875, was largely confined to the "three R's," it must not be supposed that the people were dull clods - far from it. Many of the men who 'sailed foreign' knew the coasts of the West Indies and South America intimately. Captain Asa Smallidge of Northeast Harbor was wont to say that the world's only harbor to equal our Great Harbor was that of Rio de Janeiro. [Morrison, 1960:40]

Even today, people talk about the broader vision of people who work the ocean, such as ground-fishermen, tanker crews, and other mariners.

Working at sea, on an island, alone in the woods, or alone at home, demanded self-reliance, inventiveness, practicality, courage, and hard-work. A sense of humor and the ability to entertain oneself certainly helped too.

Other Influences:

War:

Sending her sons and daughters to war had similar effects on Maine's culture as sending them to sea. Men ventured out of the known environment into unknown worlds, widening their horizons and bringing back new experiences. "Service in the Civil War gave tens of thousands of Maine men a far wider experience of the world," but Maine men and their families paid an enormous price for the experience. "The Civil War made everybody poor for a long time. Families were scarred for forty years afterward by the illness the fathers brought back, by mortgages, the high cost of bare subsistence, the memories" (Beam, 1957:45) and because "many never returned" (Barringer, 1989:9). Men died or were wounded; others simply stayed away after serving, lured perhaps by more hospitable climates or opportunities for employment.

When the Confederates captured Fort Sumter in April 1861, the Union Army called for volunteers, tempting them with local, state, and federal cash bonuses that could add up to over $1000. Although many thought the Civil War would be over soon and supported the cause, Mainers may have been particularly drawn to serve because they were eligible for bonuses if they volunteered. Even when the "draft was instituted to meet the need. Even then, most Maine servicemen were volunteers [as] there was a stigma attached to the word draftee" (Silliker, 1985:4). Maine put together all volunteer regiments throughout the war and "continued to send volunteer regiments long after other states had resorted to paying bounties" (Judd, 1995:358).

However, bonuses did not attract enough volunteers, and so The Conscription Act of 1862 was passed, requiring men between twenty and forty-five to register for a lottery and permitting a draftee to hire a substitute to take his place or pay a commutation fee of $300 (Hansen, 1989:27).

> There was a financial incentive as well. Those who had to go were anxious to collect as much bounty as possible, and by volunteering in a larger and wealthier community than their own they often fattened their pocketbook considerably. There was a terrible inequity in this system because the enrollees were credited to the quota or city in which they enrolled rather than to the one in which they resided. This left the smaller towns and rural areas facing a vicious circle of high quotas and diminished numbers of potential soldiers. [Silliker, 1985:3]

In a poor state, such as Maine, few draftees could hire a substitute or pay a commutation fee, and many were drawn to service because it offered a way to earn a living.

Approximately 73,000 Mainers served in the Civil War, the highest percentage of population of any northern state, and the cost to families and the state was great. An extraordinary 3 percent of the population of Maine was killed or wounded during the Civil War.

> By the end of the war, Maine contributed to the Union army thirty-one regiments of infantry, three regiments of cavalry, one regiment of heavy artillery, seven batteries of light artillery, and seven companies of sharpshooters. Altogether, 73,000 Maine men bore arms (about 12 percent of the state's population); 8,792 died, 11,309 were wounded or discharged because of illness. [Shain, 1991b:151]

If each of these men were part of a family of six or more (which seems conservative given the size of families then), I estimate that twenty percent of the people of Maine may have been directly affected by these casualties. Deepening the consequence to these families and to the state was the fact that most of those killed or wounded were young men who might have been counted on to contribute to family income and who may well have had dependent children, wives, and parents. Of course, not included in these statistics are the numbers of people who were affected by what we have come to call Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome. (I include data on military service in subsequent wars not only for comparison but also to refer to later in the text.)

TABLE SIX
Military Service

	DATES	Maine Pop.	Number Served	Percent Pop	Number Killed	Number Wounded	Percent Pop K/W
Civil War	1863-65	628,000	73,000	0.116242	8,792	11,309	0.032008
WW I	1917-18	765,000	35,061	0.045831	1,026		0.0013412
W.W.II	1941-45	850,000	112,962	0.132896	2,551		0.0030012
Korea	1950-55	942,000	40,099	0.042568	232		0.0002463
Vietnam	1964-75	993,000	48,000	0.048338	332		0.0003343

Population figures based on estimates from census data reported in Table Seven; Military Service data courtesy of the Office of Maine Veterans' Services, Department of Defense.

Economy:

The Civil War not only interrupted shipping and trade, severely affecting Maine's economy, but it ushered in other profound economic changes.

> The Civil War was a watershed in Maine's economy, just as it had been in Maine politics, at first simply because of the effects of wartime disruptions. But the changes in Maine also paralleled a fundamental transformation of the national economy after mid-century. Monopoly capitalism profoundly altered industries in Maine, as it did regional economies everywhere. [Judd, 1995:39]

The loss of people to injury, death and migration, the loss of markets and changes in transportation of goods that made it harder for Maine to compete, and increasing industrialization in other parts of the country, created an economic void, particularly along the coast, that required new sources of income for residents.

Traditional bases of the coastal economy, such as fishing, suffered because of changing markets and technologies. Maine agriculture suffered as railroads to the west opened up new markets to farmers working the richer soils of the Midwest. Although Maine farmers adapted to changing markets with ingenuity, such as by producing cream and berries for summer visitors, times were very difficult.[65] Lumbering as well was under pressure, not only because of dwindling stocks of prime timber, particularly south of the St. John River, but also from changing markets and technology.

In all areas of the economy, small owners were marginalized and monopolies began to dominate. Judd summarizes these changes:

> Maine's traditional industries - fishing, shipping, agriculture, lumbering, granite quarrying, lime burning, and ice harvesting - underwent tremendous changes in the years after the Civil War. Outside pressures, such as new competitors, new capital structures and business organizations, changing technologies and transportation systems, and new consumer tastes, were responsible for most of these new developments....Maine's industrial landscape was much changed at the end of the century, but the economy on the whole remained prosperous. And remarkably, a way of life that had existed in rural coastal Maine since the pre-Civil War years remained largely intact. [O'Leary, et al., 1995:418]

Though many Maine people had migrated before the Civil War, following jobs west, after the War migration accelerated as the economy of Maine deteriorated and economic conditions in other states improved.

Migration:

As just shown, during the early 1800s Maine lost residents, as "new railroad market connections made the open and more tillable lands of the Midwest a more profitable place to farm than the hilly, rocky soil of Maine" (Lewis, 1993: 93). Some Maine people followed lumbering, while others stayed in California, where they had gone during the heyday of the China trade and the gold rush. By 1860, about 50,000 people from Maine were living outside the state. Later, people moved to find jobs in urban-based industries. In 1930 "about a quarter of Maine's native sons and daughters lived in other states" (Condon, et al., 1996:507).

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[65] The reader will find an excellent discussion of the period in "Maine, The Pine Tree State from Prehistory to the Present," edited by Richard Judd, Edwin Churchill, and Joel Eastman.

TABLE SEVEN
Migration

	MAINE Population	Natural Increase	Net Migration	Net Hancock
1770	30,000			
1790	96,540			
1800	151,719			
1810	228,705			
1820	298,335			
1830	399,455			
1840	501,793			
1850	583,169			
1860	628,279			
1870	626,915			
1880	648,936			
1890	661,086			
1900	694,466			
1910	742,371		-8,000	
1920	768,014		-39,000	
1930	797,423		-1,000	
1940	847,226		-27,000	
1950	913,774		-68,000	-2,039
1960	969,265		-69,000	-2,381
1970	993,000		+75,000	666
1980	1,125,043	55,692	+44,000	6,230
1990	1,227,928	58,454		3,716

Data from Bureau of the Census, Boston Regional Office, Information Services Specialist, September 9, 1997 and the State of Maine, Department of Human Services, Office of Data, Research, and Vital Statistics.
Note: Net migration Figures 1910 - 1980 are for following decade [e.g. 1910 equals 1910s]

During the 1920s, "more than forty thousand Mainers forsook rural life, some moving to nearby cities and others leaving the state....Only about nine percent of the American-born population of Maine came from 'away.' This was the second-lowest ratio of in-migration to out-migration in the country" (Condon, et al., 1995:507). Because so few people moved to rural areas, the rural population "remained relatively homogeneous. More than three-quarters of the rural farm population in 1930 were native-born of native parentage, the highest proportion in New England" (Condon, et al., 1995:507).

Logging, sailing and fishing, and going to war were only three of the ways in which Mainers were drawn out-of-state, many of them for their most productive years. The migration of children to urban areas was another powerful influence on Mainers. Many children, such as a daughter described by Ruth Moore, left for cities like Boston, creating a terrible void in the life of their families.

> When she was in Boston, sopping around in the dirty winter streets, she longed to come home, was homesick for snow-filled woods and clean smell. But when she did come home in spring, she was restless after about two weeks of it. There wasn't enough to do, and the people seemed dull and set in their ways. [Moore, 1986:104]

Whether they returned or not, these children were changed.

Some of the most able of Maine's children left to find professional work in cities and were greatly admired when they returned. Maine writer Myra Earl Smith described an aunt who "was beautiful...[had] a keen wit, great intelligence and burning ambition....[She] was a very successful physician" who returned periodically in triumph to Winter Harbor. Other successful entrepreneurs, such as a Mr. Hammond also described by Smith, influenced native Mainers when they returned to build large cottages. When they returned, they were thought "to add lustre" to their parents and communities. Lura Beam's aunts and uncles "all...'married well,' migrated to New York, Minnesota, and California, and lived to share the roses, vacations, new suburban homes, the furs and matinees, and the trips abroad of the twentieth century's higher standard of living" (Beam, 1957:19, 100).

This pattern of migration, leaving to find work, affected the way people thought about the future.

> As a place, the hamlet too felt that life was double. In addition to its own stationary life between the hills, there was a second life by migration. The economic resources of the locality were not only the woods and the land; the third way of making a living was by migration. At twenty-one the young flew away like birds. [Beam, 1957:207]

Coatsworth adds, "The more enterprising among the [young people] spread their wings of ambition and flew away to the larger cities or to the westward" (Coatsworth, 1968:214). Migration was established early as a pattern, a pattern that persists. "Plans for migration began early, barefoot children playing in the brook made up games about the time when they would be old enough to go away alone on the train" (Beam, 1957:10).

The pattern of out-migration has deeply affected the way Maine people think about their own worth and the value of the life they offer their children. The pattern etches negativism and victimization in those who stay at home and makes people "expect" that they will not be able to find work in their communities. The economic and psychological outlet of migration may have undermined the creation of new businesses and investment in developing the economy of the state, with the unfortunate consequence of deepening dependence on tourism and people "from away." However, given the worsening economy, Maine was also fortunate to have the natural resources to attract such people.[66]

Summer Visitors

Many of these visitors were escaping, if only for a brief time, the "evils," imagined and real, of city life, which included poisonous air, corruption, crime, and licentious living. Maine offered clean air, a landscape relatively unspoiled by human intervention, and what was thought to be a purer way of living. Certainly, many visitors were projecting what they hoped to find on agreeable hosts, but their sojourn in nature seemed to revive their spirits.

Summer visitors stepped into the void in the economy and population caused by the Civil War, industrialization, and migration. Maine's relatively unspoiled and beautiful landscape had attracted visitors before the Civil War, but accommodating summer guests did not become an important part of the state's economy until the last three decades of the century. Although wealthy easterners may have started the summer migration, they were soon joined by middle-class visitors bent on escaping the heat and grime of cities and attracted by the aggressive advertising of steamship and railroad companies. Maine's lack of economic development, plus greatly improved transportation, made it an attractive vacation destination, easily reached from the middle-Atlantic and New England States, and only slightly harder for mid-westerners (Lipfert, et al., 1995:432).

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[66] Migrating out of state can, of course, be seen as a forceful step to escape being victimized, which is the way it is seen by many people from Maine, such as the man quoted on page 100. We must also remember that heavy out-migration could contribute to provincialism by taking the most energetic assertive people out of the local communities. A pattern of out-migration is then doubly insidious when it is seen as the best option for the most qualified people and defines those who remain as less able.

Many visitors answered the invitation of the Maine Central Railroad publications of 1895 to "become once more, eager children of nature" in a paradise built by Mother Nature and the hard work of its "idealized natives...rural, salt-of-the-earth people, these tight-lipped taciturn, yet humble folk, living in harmony with their inner natures and the rugged outer beauty of their land" (Lewis, 1993:91, 93). In the late 1880s, railroad publicists invented the slogan "Maine, the Nation's Playground" (Judd, 1995:434), which seems to have evolved into the phrase that now appears on license plates: Maine, Vacationland. The Maine myth was born.

At first these visitors stayed in simple boarding houses, but soon large hotels sprung up, particularly along the coast. Land speculation by syndicates from within and outside the state bought up large tracts of coastal land and carved them into small lots. "By the early 1880s, the boom had pushed the total room capacity in Maine to over 33,000, nearly two-thirds of it in York, Cumberland, Penobscot, and Hancock counties" (Judd, 1995:433).

Mount Desert Island was affected by the pattern of out-migration, the void in the economy, and the powerful influences of a seasonal in-migration that has expanded to a flood of between 2.5 and 3.0 million people each year due to the attraction of Acadia National Park. Changes in production of goods and transportation across the nation affected this movement of people.

> The whole country was in the midst of a dramatic shift brought on by industrial changes which had, themselves, been accelerated by the war. War-time advances in shipping, travel and communications soon affected all of past-war America. The little schooner gave way to the larger, faster and more efficient steamboat. Rail service extended to Ellsworth, providing regular passenger and freight transportation to all parts of the county. The telegraph allowed instant transmission of news and messages. Gone forever were the days of the provincial economy and way of life that derived its main source from the raw products harvested locally from the land and sea. [Hansen, 1989:39]

These changes set the stage for the next "discovery" of Mount Desert Island.

Mount Desert Island: Rusticators and Tourists

Even before the Civil War, Mt. Desert Island had been discovered by artists and industrialists who longed to enjoy the very way of life they had just helped change (Hansen, 1989:39). "These same rail and steamship connections would play such an important part in the second discovery of Mt. Desert at the close of the Civil War, by a different breed of pioneers called Rusticators" (Hansen, 1989:31).

On Mount Desert Island, serving visitors and summer residents took a particular form. The extraordinary beauty of the island had attracted painters as early as 1835 when Thomas Doughty of Philadelphia took a steamer from Boston to visit the island. In 1836, he exhibited *Desert Rock Lighthouse, Maine*, the first important image of the wilderness on the New England coast" in the annual art exhibition at the Boston Athenaeum (Wilmerding, 1995:13).

Eight years later, in September of 1844, Cole, sometimes called the first Rusticator, visited Mount Desert Island. Inspired, he painted its beauty and in turn inspired other painters such as Frederick Church, Thomas Birch and, later, William Morris Hunt. By 1883 the text and illustrations by Doughty and his publisher, Nathaniel Parker Willis, "had been incorporated into a larger and more handsomely illustrated book published in Boston for the growing American tourist and vacation industry" (Wilmerding, 1996:21).

Lured, in part, by the work of these painters, summer visitors began to discover the natural beauties of Mount Desert Island. These men and women, including "writers, naturalists, students, adventurers, and sportsmen," were searching for an idyll of rustic simplicity in the midst of great beauty. In August of 1855, Frederic Church accompanied Charles Tracy, his family and other friends on a month-long trip to Mount Desert Island. Tracy wrote in his "log book" :

> While our friends at home are sweltering in the heats of August, we find winter clothing not too much in the evening and morning, and the very hottest of the day is not too warm for walking out, The mountain air, the forest air, the sea air, ---all combine here, and the compound is deliciously pure. The water too is soft and faultless. We drink it cool from the wells and springs, without need of ice. [Tracy, 1997:58.]

Some writers portray the early inter-action between native Mainers and people "from away" as a "relationship that comes down to us as having been wonderfully symbiotic. Simple folk shared a pastoral life-style in the midst of bounteous nature with an adventurist intellectual elite" (Coffin, 1993:13). This rather condescending statement betrays a shallow reading of local history and denies an exploitative reality that existed then and still exists today. Though there are many summer people and native Mainers who have established warm and caring relationships over the years, nevertheless, the differences of class and money divide the two groups, interrupting honest communication and creating antagonism.

The first Rusticators, stayed in boarding homes and inns. Robert Carter, who visited in 1858, arrived, like many, by yacht on the western side of the island at Bass Harbor, which he found "not...very attractive," and stayed in Southwest Harbor, "which was described to us as the place of most resort on the island" (Carter, 1977:211). By the 1870s and 1880s "guests on Mount Desert were staying in hotels, some of which were large and sumptuous, and by 1890 "Cottages" (a coy misnomer, as many of these structures were enormous) were replacing hotels as summer residents bought their own property.

At first, visitors like Carter came to the western side of the island, which was located on the shipping lane from Boston. As more visitors arrived by train to Ellsworth and Hancock Point, the eastern side of Mount Desert Island, which had originally been called the "backside," became more favored, and the western side, now less traveled by visitors, became the "backside."

Transportation to Mount Desert Island improved greatly in the late 1800s. By 1887 Bar Harbor was served by the all-Pullman Bar Harbor Express that brought travelers from the major cities in the east, as well as by several steamship lines. Private yachts, of course, brought many to the island, but cars were not allowed on Mount Desert until 1915 because some summer people objected to their noise and pollution.

Guests stayed in hotels newly built to accommodate them: "at Northeast Harbor in 1882...lodging places such as the 'Asticou Inn' and the 'Rockend Hotel' had just come into existence, and a cottage, joined to another cottage of the same size...formed the 'Kimball House' "(Somes-Sanderson, 1982:219). By 1887 there were seventeen hotels in Bar Harbor, one of which could accommodate over five hundred guests, as well as two in Seal Harbor, five in Northeast Harbor, six in Southwest Harbor, one in Isleford, and three in Somesville (Collier, 1960:41; Morrison, 1960:46).

Before 1880, Bar Harbor, described as offering "a variety of pleasures unsurpassed in any summer resort in the country," catered not only to the wealthy, but could "accommodate all classes from $2.00 a day upwards." And, of course, "the mountain, sea and valley scenery are open to all without price or payment." However, "gradually the cottagers came into possession of the most desirable shore sites and more and more they surrounded themselves with the comforts of life," in the process changing many aspects of life not only in Bar Harbor but throughout the island (Collier, 1960:38). There was such a boom in land development that "the valuation of the town of Bar Harbor increased from $633,900 in 1880 to $5,034,958 in 1890" (Hill, 1996:128).

As Rusticators, and then "cottagers," bought Maine property, they took control of an essential asset from Maine natives. Mainers mistakenly thought they were getting the better of the deal as they sold their birthright for what seemed extraordinary profit. In 1880 the Gilleys on Sutton's Island:

> heard that three "westerners," or "Rusticators," had bought land at North-east Harbor....It was even reported that one of these pioneers had landed on the western end of Sutton's Island and walked the length of the island. The news was intensely interesting to all the inhabitants. They had heard of the fabulous prices of land at Bar Harbor, and their imaginations began to play over their own pastures and wood-lots. [Eliot, 1989:34]

By 1884, "westerners" had bought the extreme western point of Sutton's Island, and in 1886 John Gilley himself sold land to rusticators for "forty or fifty times any price which had ever been put on his farm by the acre."[67]

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[67] Table Fourteen shows that non-residents own much of the most desirable and expensive shorefront property on Mount Desert Island.

The Gilded Age

The "Gilded Age" was literally that. One anecdote about a Mrs. Edward Stotesbury suggests the chasm between native islanders and those "from away." Mrs. Stotesbury and her obliging husband remodeled their eighty room shorefront summer house twice, spending over a million dollars in the effort. "There were twenty-eight complete bathrooms; Mrs. Stotesbury's had a fabulous gold bathtub plus gold fittings. Queried once on the gold fixtures, Mrs. Stotesbury gave a characteristic answer, 'They're very economical...you don't have to polish them' " (Collier, 1960:72).

By the 1890's, Bar Harbor came to be "the right" place to be in the summer, described in a guidebook as containing "more beautiful and costly residences than any other watering-place in America" (Collier, 1960:62- 63). There were upwards of one hundred seventy-five cottages in Bar Harbor, ninety of them on par with the Stotesbury's. Amory Thorndike, a summer resident who moved to the island year-round after the fire of 1947, suggests the economic importance of this growing "industry."

> At that time everything depended on servants. The average summer estate would have at least ten, seven in the 'cottage', because you couldn't possibly get along without a second waitress or butler and a second chambermaid and at least three outside, a gardener, a coachman and a second man. The 'cottages', therefore, had to have seven servants rooms (which accounts for their being so large), and you had to have a stable on the grounds, either with a tenement in it for the gardener's family or a separate house for him....In addition to a table full of horses and carriages, many of the summer people had their own yachts and private piers along the shore. [Collier, 1960:63]

Catering to summer guests provided considerable new work, from construction to maid-service, for island people.

> Many people were required to aid in the construction of the elaborate summer "cottages," and to serve as gardeners and caretakers. Local people also were employed to drive the carriages and buckboards and either supply or care for the horses whose owners had brought them to the Island for the summer months, although usually grooms accompanied them and were in charge. Since boating was such a popular activity...men were employed to manage [the boats]....Women were employed as maids, cooks, dressmakers, and hairdressers. The market for fish, butter, milk, chickens, vegetables and other produce brought money to Island farms. Stores were increased in size or built new. [Somes-Sanderson, 1982:229-231]

Even natives who feared the consequences of 'rustication' were forced to admit that rusticators were a "boom to the economy at a time when money was scarce and native industry declining" (Somes-Sanderson, 1982:231).

Many men from Tremont worked on construction of these large hotels and houses. Later, their wives and daughters served as maids and cooks. As there were no paved road or cars on the island, and most people didn't own horses and buggies, men walked to work. An older resident remembers people telling him: "The craftsmen who worked on [the hotels and houses], in fact a lot of them walked to work. Got up early to walk from Seal Cove to Bar Harbor and Northeast....They would get up early in the morning and walk to Northeast, a lot of them would do that." Women would leave their families for the summer and live in the hotel or house where they were working.

However, there were consequences. The Bar Harbor *Record* noted the change:

> The social life of the early 1880's was entirely different from that of today in Bar Harbor. Then it was a society without distinct dividing lines; it was a hotel society life. The descendants of the hotel dwellers of those days are many of them 'cottagers' today. In the hotel days the 'cottagers' met us on common ground. Today the social life is but transferred from the cities with lines strictly drawn in circles. Still, to many, those were the days of happiest memory. [Collier, 1960:51]

In the 1890s, Edwin Lawrence Godkin, founder of the *Nation* and editor-in-chief of the *New York Post*, decried the invasion, pointing out its most insidious aspect:

> The cottager, who has become to the boarder what the red squirrel is to the gray, a ruthless invader and exterminator...gradually, and it may be at first imperceptibly, separates himself in feeling and in standards from his fellow-boarders. The year after he is in the cottage and the mischief is done. The change has come. Caste has been established, with all its attendant evils. The community, once so simple and homogeneous, is now divided into two classes, one of which looks down on the other. [Shain, (b), 1991:352]

Others agreed with his observation.

The affluent cottager could lord it over boarders, but year-round residents were dependent on both and learned "their place."

> There is no doubt but that the differing backgrounds, interests and behaviors would have been difficult at best, but on Mount Desert the sensitive and reserved village folk, not given

> to communicating with strangers, and certainly not with their employers, were in marked contrast to the cliquish, exclusive sojourners, conscious of their social standing and aware only of their employees as servants.
>
> Of course, said an elderly lady in a 1920 interview, 'they hired us to be their servants and I suppose we were, for we did the work of servants and were paid for it. We didn't have to take the jobs but we needed the money. Still, they needn't have made our lower social level so obvious. For example, they didn't talk with us in the same way they did with their friends. We were never invited as 'guests' to anything. Of course, we didn't invite them to our doings either. We were just different.' [Somes-Sanderson, 1982:235]

It seems that the Maine tradition of valuing people for the way in which they did their work had come into conflict with the wider culture which valued people for the prestige of their status, either ascribed at birth or achieved in work.

The librarian in Northeast Harbor, identifies the beginning of a cleft between summer and year-round people in 1906 when the Northeast Harbor Swim Club was established by and for summer people exclusively. Until then, villagers had owned the major assets of land and property and had worked with rusticators on Village improvements such as The Neighborhood House, the Library and other resources. The Swim Club was designed to separate the two constituencies and achieved its purpose (Pyle, Interview, 1994).

Sarah Orne Jewett's attempt to pass off the importance of the changing relationship inadvertently underscores it:

> It has been suggested that the wealthy summer people were unintentionally and unwittingly guilty of a form of insidious corruption, changing a class of self-independent, hardworking individuals into a group of parasites and lackeys. To a degree, this may have been true. But surely no one can be blamed for offering opportunity, or for exchanging a difficult, dangerous and sometimes impoverished life for one that was easier, more secure and more profitable. All that one had to do to share in the bonanza was to learn to say 'yes, sir.' This was not always easy for men and women whose chief pride had always been that they were their own bosses. To some, the difficult lesson was not worth learning, but to more, the compensations made it worthwhile. [Jewett, 1981:167]

Another writer, William Henry Bishop, pointed out that on Mount Desert Island, "which fashion has so liberally taken into favor...[where young waitresses] devour...with undisguised admiration the toilets of the city belles; and the men [work] as porters, drivers, and hostlers, a bolder portion of the men refused to yield to the blandishments of these spiritless new occupations, and cured their fish and went their voyages as usual" (Shain, 1991b:242).

The Gilded Age in Bar Harbor lasted only about thirty summers, ended by World War I, the 'servant problem,' income tax (Collier, 1960:72), and the Depression, which severely curtailed both tourism and any "conspicuous displays of wealth," since both were thought "unseemly" (Judd, 1995:438). The Great Fire of 1947 destroyed "more than 170 houses...several of the remaining large hotels and sixty-seven summer cottages....Total damages were estimated at $23 million (Hill, 1996:68).

However, class distinctions established on Mount Desert Island during the Gilded Age still exist and have led to a mutually beneficial but uneasy alliance, particularly on the eastern side of the island. At a recent meeting to present candidates for elective office in Mount Desert, a man who is a fifth generation Mainer born in Seal Harbor stated his perception of this relationship with startling clarity: "Everyone gets to lead the good life here. It is important to understand the relationship with the summer colony. They pay seventy-five percent of the taxes, we maintain the town" (Smith, 1995: meeting). No one argued with this characterization of the relationship, or debated its implications. And an older island resident was quoted as saying that when she was a young woman natives were expected to give up their places in line to a summer person or step off a sidewalk when a summer resident approached (Raymond, 1997: Interview).

Maine writer Sanford Phippen gives us a penetrating view into the insidious effects of the "servant" mentality in "Kitchen Boy," a book about his adolescence working in an elegant bed and breakfast on Hancock Point. He describes his reason for silence after being insulted by his boss, "such was the depth of my good servant's complex, and lifelong working class training: always fearful of being let go, of being found wanting, of getting a bad reputation, always willing to serve and to do a good job, no matter what, and never questioning my boss to her face" (Phippen, 1996:4). He goes on to show us where, in part, he learned to react this way.

'Did you ever serve tripe to the summer people?' I asked Sid.

'No. Tripe's kitchen food for us kitchen folk.'

> Expanding on that theme, my father, with what was left of his hair hanging in his face as usual, expounded upon his negative philosophy of life, telling me I shouldn't get myself all worked up over some lousy, low-paying job in a summer hotel, since I would soon find out that there was not much future in it and that most jobs in the world 'for people like us' are pretty goddamn tedious. [Phippen, 1996:38]

Some very able and motivated young-people are able to break away from the weight of this legacy, which can crush those of lesser spirit, but it is a burden many 'in service' carry with them and pass on to their children.

Mainers continue to find defense in humor;[68] however, the symbiotic alliance between native Mainers and tourists and summer people is still built on a myth that ignores the realities of a harsh climate, limited options, and the needs of families who find it hard to preserve both a way of life and a place in which they can afford to live their lives. The implications of moving from an economy based on production and transport of goods to one based on service include dependence and second-class citizenship that now frustrate Maine's ability to offer other opportunities to her people.

Maine: 1920 -1990

Because the state was economically depressed before The Great Depression, many in Maine discounted the potential damage of The Crash. *The Kennebec Journal*, for example, claimed that "the crash directly affected not more than one percent of the population" and joked that the stock market was trying to scare people much like Halloween trick or treaters (Condon, et al., 1995:512). As The Depression developed, however, the effects in Maine deepened and became more painful.

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[68] For example, in February, 1895 locals first held a dance, "The Hayseeder Way Bak Bal," parodying the elegant social events of the summer people. In 1995 the dance held its centennial. And recently, a manager of the local airport was serving a very difficult summer resident who was getting increasingly irate about the delays due to fog. Finally she said "Do you know who I AM?" The manager looked over his shoulder and called to one of the pilots in the adjacent office, "Joe," he said, "I've got an amnesia victim here - what shall we do?" Everyone in line, including finally, the chastened lady, laughed.

> Tourist travel was down 20% in 1932, and the state's largest railroad, the Maine Central, which had posted a profit of $1.1 million in 1931, sustained a loss of $63,000. Annual town reports showed similar signs: growing lists of tax delinquents, swelling payments for poor relief....Income tax collections in Maine were 36% lower in 1932 than in 1931. [Condon, et al., 1995:514]

These effects were felt unevenly throughout Maine. For rural people, who were already largely self-sufficient, the Depression was less painful than for urbanites who could not grow their own food and heat their houses with wood.

Traditional Maine culture deterred people from asking for or accepting help. The Gardiner administration refused to ask for federal Reconstruction Finance Corporation funds to help the unemployed and ignored the $1.6 million allocated to Maine for public works jobs on highway construction. Towns and counties in Maine dealt with decreased tax revenues by slashing budgets rather than applying for federal funds. Roosevelt's New Deal ran counter to the grain of people who shared a "longstanding rural, conservative bias against federal power, state-run welfare programs, and economic regulation at the same time" (Condon, et al., 1995:515-516). Lorena Hickok, a friend of Eleanor Roosevelt's who was a field investigator for the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, reported to Harry Hopkins that "thousands of families should be getting federally funded relief [in Maine], but weren't. And why not? Partly because a 'Mainite...would almost starve rather than ask for help.' It was considered a disgrace in Maine to be 'on the town'" (Condon, et al., 1995:516).

Only World War II ended The Great Depression in Maine. Maine sent over 80,000 men and women into service. Many more worked in war-related industries, such as ship-building at the Bath Iron Works, or were drawn to factories in Connecticut and other states in New England during the war. Unemployment finally "melted away" and personal income rose to "record levels" (Condon, 1995:527).

The war also affected Maine politically. Having staunchly rejected Roosevelt's New Deal in his first two runs for the presidency, Mainers almost elected him as "commander-in-chief" in his third term. Maine, positioned on the border with Canada and closest to England and Germany was not isolationist. There was concern on Mount Desert Island about U-boats, particularly after a submarine landed two German spies on Hancock Point.

Serving in the War took many Maine people out of state, exposing them to worlds different than the relative isolation of Maine. The consequences of World War II were not nearly as drastic as losses suffered in the Civil War; however, exposure to other ways of life once again changed the culture of Maine. Many men from Tremont served in the Armed Forces, learning skills that served them well later.

Migration and Population: Redux

As mentioned earlier, even before the Civil War Mainers had left the state to find employment. This pattern intensified as the state's economy deteriorated after the Civil War. I suggest this pattern has had very serious consequences for schooling and has helped create a sense of inferiority, inadequacy and victimization.

> On the eve of the Great Depression, the rural landscape that had proved so resistant in the late nineteenth century was already in the throes of change. Three-fifths of Maine's eight hundred thousand people still lived in rural areas, but this proportion was falling. During the 1920's, for instance, more than forty thousand Mainers forsook rural life, some moving to nearby cities and others leaving the state. In fact, about a quarter of Maine's native sons and daughters lived in other states in 1930, while only 9% of the American-born population of Maine came from "away." This was the second-lowest ratio of in-migration to out-migration in the country. Since so many left and so few came, the rural population remained relatively homogeneous. More than three-quarters of the rural farm population in 1930 were native-born of native parentage, the highest proportion in New England. [Condon, 1995:507]

Multiplying the effects of this out-migration was the fact those who left tended to be between twenty and forty-four years of age, taking their energies and schooling out of the state, which reminds us of the common belief stated here by a man from Tremont who is a fifth generation Mainer: "We pay three times for our kids: first when we feed, house and clothe them, second when we pay taxes for their education, and third, when we lose them out-of-state."

Population figures for the period tell a grim story. The growth rate in the 1940s was only slightly more than half the national rate and only one-third the national rate in the 1950s, leading

Mainers to predict that it would continue to fall and playing to negativism and depression in the culture. In response, Governor Kenneth Curtis promised in his 1967 inaugural speech to staunch the flow of young people out of the state (Condon, 1995:532,555).

Why did so many leave? The economic lure was enormous, and even neighboring states offered more opportunity and higher salaries and wages.

> The fact is that thousands of Mainers knew that they could do better economically elsewhere. In the two decades from 1945 to 1967, per capita personal income in Maine averaged only 84.1% of the nation's average. (Maine did worse, relatively, in these boom times than it had during the Great Depression). Moreover, states with far better personal income figures were not far away: New Hampshire outdid Maine at 91.2% of the national level and Massachusetts at 110.1%. Connecticut stood at 128.9% of the national average; no wonder some in Lewiston referred to East Hartford as the "second capital of Maine." [Condon, 1995:533]

In addition, though it is difficult to prove, I think that people's perceptions of their own efficacy, opportunities within the state, and their ability to create opportunity affected their decisions to stay or leave. The crippling effects of believing that the best people move out of state and that only the less able and less adventuresome remain behind is still evident, as we saw in Chapter Three.

Migration to find jobs played a central role in Tremont, and many of the older residents speak about its influence in the dispersal of families, both in the past and in the present. Table Eight shows us that from approximately 1910 to the early 1970s population diminished. Again, throughout the testimony of local people is the refrain that if a person were able s/he left the state.

> Shirley: I looked around and I saw the people, and you know, I was brought up different that is all, a lot of people never had anything up here, never went anywhere, lot of people never left the state of Maine, they still live here.
>
> John: They never had money enough.
>
> Shirley: Well and then you wonder, well, why if things were so bad as that here back years ago why did people stay here? A lot of people didn't stay here.
>
> B: Lot of people didn't?
>
> John: Northern Maine, all the young people went out to the aircraft, stayed all in Thompsonville, made a whole housing development.

Shirley: There is nothing here to do, where do you make a living? How do you make a living?

Mr. R. talks about how migration affected his own family.

Mr. R.: There was a lot of out-migration....Some families moved from here to Massachusetts - Arlington.

B: Why Arlington?

Mr. R.: I don't know, unless they found work there, they were mostly tradesman, carpenters, plumbers.

B: A whole family would move, or the old or the young?

Mr. R.: One family, usually it would be somebody goes there first. I had an uncle...he worked on Boston elevated for years, at the same time he built houses, he must have built hundreds of houses.

B: So did young people go without their families on their own ?

Mr. R.: When I went to high school there were five cousins. I'm going to say over half the family did move off the island, in fact he went and never come back, went to Boston....

B: He and your mother had how many kids?

Mr. R.: He was born over in Richtown, eleven in my family, two died.

B: Out of the nine, how many stayed here?

Mr. R.: Only three or four.

B: Where did the rest go?

Mr. R.: Brother in Alabama, other parts of the state, all spread out, some came back. I had a sister who just died in Ogunquit, and different families, sister in New Brunswick.

Others report equally high percentages of out-migration, and though many migrants return to Maine to retire and always consider it "home," clearly others do not, and families suffered losses that still scar their memories.

TABLE EIGHT
Historic Population of Tremont

1850	1,425
1860	1,768
1870	1,822
1880	2,011
1890	2,036

1900	2,010
1910	(split Southwest Harbor) 1,116
1920	1,029
1930	954
1940	1,118
1950	1,115
1960	1,044
1970	1,003
1980	1,222
1990	1,324

(Tremont Comprehensive Plan, 1997: A-2)

Governor Curtis's promise to stem the flow of people out of the state may have been realized more by financial pressures in other states than changes in his own and a perception by people from out-of-state that Maine offered "Life the way it should be" or as "utopia-by-default" (Condon, 1995:556). In the 1960s a small stream of "back-to-the landers" began to see Maine as a place industrialization had not polluted and as a land of opportunity for a simpler and less hectic life-style.

During the 1970s and 1980s, Maine's population grew "more rapidly than before, at times even more rapidly than the nation as a whole" (Condon, 1995:555). This in-migration, "composed primarily of relatively young, well-educated exurbanites with professional or managerial training or experience" (Condon, 1995:556), may have contained many who were originally summer visitors, now coming to live in Maine year-round and drawn in part by hazy dreams of a better way of life and real opportunities they could find in an improving economy.[69] Ironically, these people had many of the attributes of the well-trained young Mainers who were simultaneously leaving the state to find better opportunities elsewhere. Many such people were attracted to Mount Desert Island, either to take existing professional jobs or to create jobs in a place they wanted to enjoy and in which they wanted to raise their families.

The improving economy in Maine is reflected in unemployment figures for the period and a rise in per capita income.

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[69] Again, I rely not only on Dr. Condon's essays, but also on my experience as a real estate broker and personal reasons for moving to Mount Desert Island. My family and I were part of this stream, returning in 1979 to a place I had loved since first visiting in 1948.

> From the end of World War II to 1981, Maine's unemployment rate was greater, almost every year, than that of the United States as a whole. But, interestingly, between 1981 and 1988, the reverse was true. During 1982, with national unemployment peaking at nearly 11 percent, between 9 and 10 percent of Mainers were idled. After this, the rate dropped steadily to 3.5 percent in late 1988.
>
> Second, although Maine's per-capita personal income remained at about 85-86 percent of the national figure, it increased at a rate consistently faster than the national average through the early 1980s. As a result, Maine rose from forty-first to thirty-first in per capital personal income between 1980 and 1987. In constant dollars--the only meaningful measure in an age of inflation--Mainers earned well over $2000 more per person in 1985 than in 1970. [Condon and Barry, 1995:557]

Unfortunately, not all Mainers rose on this tide. Mirroring a national trend, some Mainers grew prosperous while others, particularly single mothers with dependent children, grew poorer.

Many of the jobs created in Maine reflected the diminishing opportunities in manufacturing as employers moved their factories out of state and even out of the country, increasing Maine's reliance on service jobs requiring workers with only limited education.

> Underemployment explains much of the gap between Maine's image as a "Vacationland" and the reality of persistent urban and rural poverty. Sixty percent of the jobs created in Cumberland County between 1979 and 1984 were in the low-paying retail trade and service sectors. [Condon and Barry 1995:562]

Poorly educated students became poorly paid workers who could not easily compete with people from out-of-state for jobs or housing.

Though costs of living were lower in Maine than in other New England states, per capita income reflected Maine's relative economic depression.

> [I]n the south-coastal counties, York, Cumberland, and Sagadahoc, per-capita personal income in 1984 was at 95 percent of the U.S. mean; in eastern Maine, 78 percent; in northern Maine, 71 percent....A guidance counselor at Belfast Area High School noted with some resignation that graduates could look forward to nothing but "almost make-work employment."[Condon and Barry 1995:563]

Though it is hard to create jobs in a depressed economy, and in an area with few natural resources, I think the underlying belief that there are no opportunities or ways to create opportunity in the local economy is critically important. This fatalistic view of life and what it can offer makes success, however it is measured, very difficult to achieve.[70]

Summary

As the title "Working Memory" suggests, we are formed in part by our individual and collective histories. It is important to understand our own story so that we can in some measure shape our future. The history of Maine, Mount Desert Island, and Tremont influences the way people living in those places perceive what happens to them and the way they act on their perceptions.

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[70] I am reminded by the guidance counselor's resignation that at about this time two very successful antique dealers from Madison Avenue "retired" to Belfast, bringing their business with them. They quickly established a new store in Belfast, then a very depressed town, and drew buyers year-round from Maine and out-of-state.

SKETCHES OF BAR HARBOR

The Bar Harbor Club

August, 1957

I dress carefully, trying out several different combinations: a blue cashmere sweater and white skirt? No, too hot and informal. The embroidered silk dress we bought in Hong Kong which makes me look older? No, not good for dancing. The pink organdy? No, too formal. Some of the older girls wear very daring dresses with décolletage, but I am not so bold. The daughters of the richest summer people on the island wear wildly discordant but wonderfully colorful Mexican skirts with wide leather belts studded with silver medallions and turquoise. I admire their lack of any need to conform, but I am not in their zone of comfort. I settle for a timid pale yellow dress, low white heels and pearl earrings. The Bar Harbor Club Dance is more intimidating than the dance at my own club, and I am only going because Billy has promised to dance with me.

The Club is much more elegant than the ones in Northeast Harbor or Seal Harbor. Huge vases of lilies tower on the tables exuding a rich perfume that flows through the rooms. The chandeliers glisten, the dark wood floor mirrors our faces and forms, and fine chintz festoons the windows and covers the settees and mahogany side chairs. The band has already started and couples are swirling to a Fox-trot. The old ladies line the walls, their lorgnettes at the ready. I know they watch us as we walk in and I wonder about their gossip.

"Katherine, do you know that one? She's a bit young to be here, don't you think? I wonder who she is."

"Oh, Sylvia, I think that whole group is from Washington. Not even New York. I don't think they've come out yet."

"Geraldine, look at her in that insipid yellow dress. She looks so awkward and out of place."

Billy and I start to dance. I watch the other girls laughing and flirting and I feel like an ugly duckling. No one is cutting in and I wonder if I am getting a pimple. The silent maids in black uniforms with white lace collars are passing champagne, highballs, and trays of caviar and pink shrimp mounded over ice to the adults. I want to sit down or go home. Billy says he has to dance with Sarah, who is the real reason he has come here. So he leaves me against the wall - wishing I were one of the lilies instead of, yes, you guessed it, a wallflower. I try to avoid the lorgnettes by checking out my fingernails. My grandmother used to watch the Dick Clark Show while telling me all about the intricate liaisons of the dancers. Is that what these old ladies are doing?

Billy comes back after what seems like days, looking a bit disconsolate, and I tell him I am sorry and that he doesn't have to watch out for me, I'll just go sit in the bathroom. "No," he says. "Stop that."

We go back out on the dance floor to attempt a waltz. And then things really start to pick up. A short pudgy boy with sweaty hands taps on Billy's back and we dance until a taller boy with bad skin double-cuts to dance with me and is followed by a startlingly good looking dark-haired boy with brilliant blue eyes who steps on my toes. Then Billy comes back, but by this time I am exhausted and relieved when the band, four guys with large Adam's apples, slip away for a break, mopping their brows and reaching for glasses.

After the break an older boy, with deep dimples comes over and then two other boys I actually know. I am having a glorious time. I haven't found the love of my life, but I am not worried because I am fourteen and I have some time. We don't talk about anything, but at least I am dancing, and the old ladies seem to be nodding with the music in a rather approving way.

It is only several months later that I find out that Billy, in an effort to launch my social career, has held a dollar bill behind my back for each of my swains to collect before they do their duty.

August, 1985

My step-mother-in-law is on a cruise from Boston to Halifax and will be stopping in Bar Harbor for a clambake held at The Club. We go to meet her and I walk around the club. So many of the old summer families have left the town, not wanting, perhaps, to share it with the tourists who arrive in larger numbers each summer. Now The Bar Harbor Club must open itself to cruise boats and bus tours for luncheons while the summer clubs in the other towns have long waiting lists.

Bar Harbor recovered from The Great Fire and the hard times of its aftermath by becoming increasingly commercial. Now shops line Main Street offering plastic lobster keychains made in Japan, T-shirts proclaiming "Bar Harbor, the Way Life Ought to be, Ayup," balsam pillows with painted chickadees, moose puppets, moose dropping candy, and lobster ice cream - it is all here and that is what they have all come for. But since the mid-seventies the town has also gentrified somewhat as the remaining cottages became fancy Bed and Breakfasts with names like The Breakwater, The Carrying Place, and The Tides, and there are also stores offering expensive and elegant keepsakes of a trip to Bar Harbor: Maine tourmalines set in gold, woven shawls in subtle colors and patterns, hand-thrown pots with rich glazes and wood furniture polished until it glows warmly in the shop window.

But the Club has suffered. The chintz is faded and frayed at the seams. The floors are dulled and there are water stains on the ceilings. The gutters sag away from the building and the lawn is pitted with brown. The waiters are college kids who smile and flirt as they pass the trays of drinks and hors d'oeuvres. The cucumber sandwiches have been made the night before, or perhaps recycled, and the bread is dried out; there are only a few shrimp and the wine is cheap. The clambake seems to amuse the travelers though, and they enjoy looking out at the harbor filled with small yachts and cruise boats and thinking about the "Gilded Age" in Bar Harbor when everyone who was anyone was where they are right now.

August, 1997

The Club has been for sale for many years. Entrepreneurs keep coming up with plans, but once they "do the numbers" they retreat. A spa? A health center? A club? A corporate retreat? A center for a theater for the disabled? There have been many ideas but no buyers. Now the Club is closed - the building sits like a sullen dowager, her painted face failing to disguise the ravages of age: pasty face, smudged eye makeup, bright red lipstick like little streams trickling down the lines around her mouth. It would cost a lot of money to re-sculpt this hulk into her former beauty, and no one has much hope that such surgery would succeed even if there were a suitor willing to foot the bill for a venture with so little likelihood of return.

The Abbe Museum

In the early May morning, pale light brushes unfurling birch leaves and fern fronds on either side of the long bark-covered path from the parking lot. I walk from my truck to the museum, its distinctive yellow stone walls and red tile roof catching the sun. The quiet of morning is punctuated by chickadees, and a partridge thrums like a lawnmower starting up. Set in the woods away from Bar Harbor, the museum is a tranquil island on an island, but soon the busses will disgorge their passengers.

The museum is dark and cool, a hexagon lined with old-fashioned glass-covered wooden display cases and bisected by another set of cases. Four dioramas show how Indians, not "Native Americans," lived in Maine - we haven't gotten very PC here yet. There is a long dark hall leading to my office, where, ensconced with boxes of artifacts and records, I oversee this legacy of a rich man's hobby, a whimsical collection of split ash baskets, porcupine quill work, and stone and bone artifacts from nearby sites.

I was hired, because though I had worked at the Smithsonian and Peabody Museums it was just as a summer intern, and though I had a graduate degree, it was in sociology. I didn't know a lot, and the head of the Board of Trustees, a formidable woman, thought I would be malleable and attentive. The longer I am here the more I find I need to attend to, and I begin to see this museum as an artifact in itself of what is at best benign neglect, and at worst malignant, in the running of small museums as fiefdoms.

When I was hired, I was asked to re-do all the exhibits. High time, I thought as I looked at the bleached aqua wallpaper curling under porcupine quill belts, sweet grass baskets, and stone and shell tools. Not exactly an acid free environment, I mused. And not exactly a user friendly museum - the exhibits were dusty and boring, the labels either nonexistent or hard to read. I was told 50,000 people came to this museum because it is in the National Park - an extraordinary number that was taken casually, as, I found, were most records.

I turn on the electricity and pull up the dark shades. As light filters past the high windows, it gleams on the cases, fading the objects within. When I open the storage drawers under the display cases, the artifacts jiggle together, abrading as they have for years, so that dust accumulates in the corners of their little boxes. There is no de-humidification system, nor is the museum heated, so artifacts must endure destructive extremes of temperature and humidity.

After working with the cataloguing system for six months, I remained puzzled. Why, I wondered, were dissimilar artifacts from different sites grouped together? Finally, I gave up puzzling through this mystery and asked the cataloguer, the ancient widow of the first Director.

"Susan, why are a group of artifacts given one number when there are so many from different places all together?"

She turned her crinkled parchment face to me and said sweetly, as if to a child, "Oh Barbara, we are saving the numbers."

The logic escaped me, and I replied, "But Susan, numbers go to infinity."

"But Barbara, we have always done it this way."

That I couldn't deny.

On the upper shelf in my office I found a graying white box labeled "Passamaquoddy Dog Hair blanket," which was confirmed in the ledger of acquisitions by a spidery hand. How exciting, I thought, though I wondered why it looked rather like a faded version of blankets I had seen in Mexican markets. I searched the literature, but couldn't find that the Passamaquoddy used dog hair for weaving, so I took the blanket to the Merrimack Valley Textile Museum, which sent it to a Mr. Blood at the FBI. Three months later Mr. Blood reported that it was a blanket from Mexico, made from sheep's wool and probably brought back by a tourist years ago.

Usually I sit in my inner sanctum thinking of ways to find some money for this little treasure of a place so the artifacts can be properly cared for, or ways to take the exhibits to schools and nursing homes. When I have had enough of being by myself, I wander out into the gallery, watching the people to see what they enjoy, what attracts their attention, and which exhibits get only cursory looks.

The head of the board told me my budget for doing over all the exhibits was $100. This was about one/one hundredth of what I had hoped for - but we invested in an old door with which to make a show and tell exhibit with worthless artifacts whose provenance we could not trace. We asked questions - What was this used for? - and then attached wooden labels to lift for the answer. We positioned the exhibit at child-level, and it always amazed and amused me to watch as hefty adults bent over to smell the sweet grass and lift the answer labels.

"Oh George, look at this. Now what do you think it is?"

"Doesn't look like much to me Marge."

"Well," triumphant in the advantage of newly acquired knowledge, "It's a porcupine quill. The Indians used them to make those boxes over there."

I put out a suggestion box and then made an exhibit of the questions and answers.

"What are the beautiful pink and white flowers we see growing everywhere?"

"Rugosa roses."

"Where are the Indians now?"

I think of the skull of a man who was once someone's father, husband, brother, son - that I found in a wooden box in my office. I told the head of the board that I wanted to send it back to his descendants for burial, but she refused to let me. So I throw out the question because I *cannot answer it truthfully and choose another that reminds me how dry the summer* has been and of the risk we run of fire when there are so many visitors here.

"Why don't they turn on the water in the streams?"

"Only God can do that."

I stand and watch, answer questions when I can, ask people where they are from and what they have been doing on their vacation. In spring the young newlyweds come in, clasping hands, trying to move as one animal with four legs. In July the busses arrive in earnest. We are lucky to be on their route, though we don't take donations or charge admission because that is deemed unseemly by the board, the same board that decided it wasn't nice to set up a museum store or wise to have Indians demonstrate how they made baskets because they might be drunk.

The tour director hustles people around - they are on a tight schedule. I feel angry at myself for seeing these nice people, because most of them *are* nice, as herds of manatees swimming through a dark channel, or as pods of tadpoles. By the end of the season they seem faceless, and I am exhausted by repeating myself all summer. I know a little bit of what the shopkeepers, maids, boat hands, waitresses, bus boys, and caretakers feel: enough. But I don't like my protective condescension and unvoiced anger; besides, we need these visitors to pay the winter's bills.

They are large and dressed in clothes that clash like exuberant cymbals. On hot days they are sweating and seem to welcome the cool stone interior of the museum. Their hair and shirts cling to them, outlining the bulges of their bodies as they suck in air after the exertion of walking from the parking lot. I wonder at their patience and the enormous effort they make to do and see so little. Mothers with children, fathers doing their duty by vacation but sometimes wanting, I think, to be almost anywhere else, even at work. Most seem happy for the break and the chance to say they have been here. On rainy days we get anxious parents and children, dripping in their yellow slickers, leaving puddles by the favorite displays. And in fall the busses bring us "Leaf Peepers," who are more gentle and peaceful as they trudge through the museum in slow motion.

I ask what they have seen.

"Oh we've done the island. We loved it. It is so beautiful and peaceful. I bet nothing bad ever happens here."

"Where did you go?"

"We went up Cadillac, and then did the Loop Road and had a popover at Jordan Pond."

"Did you go over to Southwest Harbor or Tremont?"

"Oh no, there wasn't time."

Or, less frequently, "Yes."

Followed by, "But there wasn't anything there."

Some tell me about the boat trips they have been on.

"We loved the whales, we went over them in the boat. And the eagles, we fed them. The Captain took the boat right up to the osprey nest. The mother was sitting on the nest, but she flew over our heads and tried to drive us away. It was real comical."

I am surprised by how quickly they move from place to place - and idly I wonder if this is because television has reduced their attention spans to thirty minute segments.

"How long are you staying?"

"We are going now; we are on a tour. But we bought lots of postcards to show folks back home."

"Great. How long were you here?"

"Oh, we've been here about four hours."

And, I learn later, four hours is the average length of stay for a visitor to Mount Desert Island, Maine.

CHAPTER FIVE

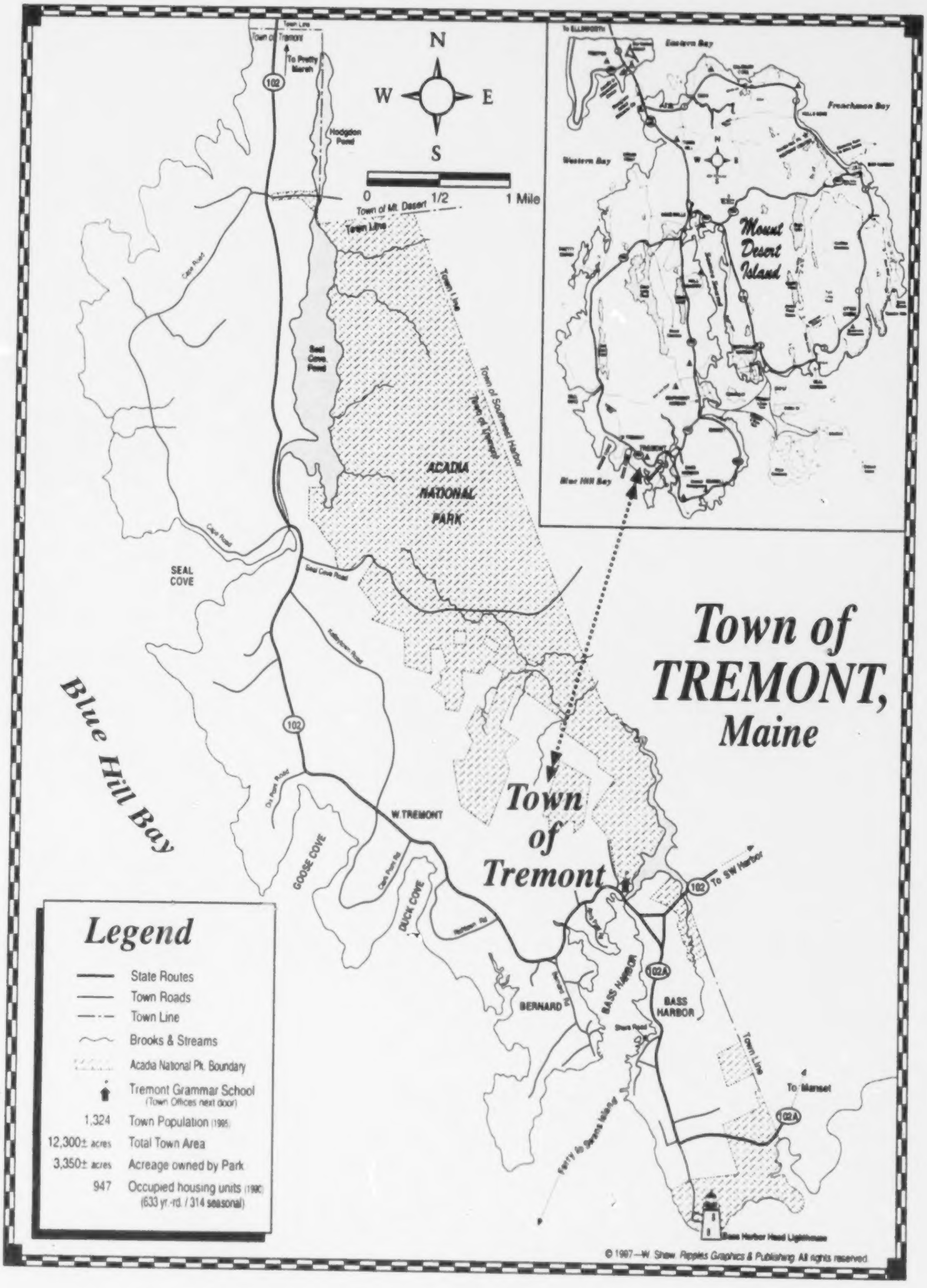
Portrait of Tremont, Maine

The Town of Tremont, occupying about 12,300 acres of land, touches the Town of Mount Desert at Pretty Marsh and stretches down the western coast of Mount Desert Island to Ship's Harbor, where it meets the Town of Southwest Harbor. The main road, Route 102, carries the traveler past the villages of Seal Cove, West Tremont, Bernard, and Bass Harbor, but, unlike when visiting the other island towns, one has to leave the road to find the ocean.

Many years ago, before moving to Tremont, I ran a museum in Sieur de Monts, part of Acadia National Park, located outside the Village of Bar Harbor. Occasionally, visitors would tell me they had been to the western side of the island but that "there was nothing there." Perhaps they meant they could not find the ocean. If they had turned down one of the roads that follow the fingers of land pointing into the sea, they would have found spectacular views of coves dotted with resting lobster boats while the sun played over the water, creating endless paintings, or at least "photo ops."

The Atlantic Ocean was once the main thoroughfare from Boston to Mount Desert Island, Downeast Maine, and the Maritimes. Tremont, with its fine harbors, was ideally located to serve sailing ships and, later, steamers. However, when trains and automobiles eclipsed the popularity of the steamers, Tremont was by-passed and became the "backside" of the island.

Tremont has the smallest population of the four towns on Mount Desert Island, with 1324 residents at the time of the 1990 census. The population of Tremont has the highest proportion of native-born Mainers of the four island towns (70.7 percent) and the least ethnic or racial diversity. In 1990, 99.2 percent of the population was white, six residents were native American, and five


Town of TREMONT, Maine
Town of Tremont
Blue Hill Bay
N
S
E
W
0
1/2
1 Mile
Town Line
Town of Tremont
To Pretty Marsh
102
Hodgdon Pond
Town of Mt. Desert
Town Line
Seal Cove Pond
Town Line
Town of Southwest Harbor
Town of Tremont
ACADIA NATIONAL PARK
Cape Road
SEAL COVE
Seal Cove Road
Kelleyhaven Road
Ox Point Road
W.TREMONT
GOOSE COVE
DUCK COVE
Cape Point Rd
102
To SW Harbor
102A
BASS HARBOR
BASS HARBOR
BERNARD
Shore Road
Ferry to Swans Island
Town Line
To Manset
102A
Bass Harbor Head Lighthouse
Eastern Bay
Western Bay
Frenchman Bay
Blue Hill Bay
To ELLSWORTH
Mount Desert Island
Legend
State Routes
Town Roads
Town Line
Brooks & Streams
Acadia National Pk. Boundary
Tremont Grammar School (Town Offices next door)
1,324 Town Population (1995)
12,300± acres Total Town Area
3,350± acres Acreage owned by Park
947 Occupied housing units (1990) (633 yr.-rd. / 314 seasonal)
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were of unspecified, but different, races.[71] In Hancock County 6.6 percent of residents have lived in a different county and 12.1 percent in a different state. In Tremont, only 3.1 percent have lived in a different county and 3.9 percent in a different state. About 67 percent of those over five years of age have lived in the same house since 1985 (Table One).

The population has fluctuated within quite narrow parameters since 1900. The most remarkable increase (24 percent) occurred between 1970 and 1980, largely due to the extraordinary rise in the cost of housing in other sections of the island. It is likely that young families, particularly those from the Town of Mount Desert, could not afford housing in their home town and had to seek it in Tremont, where rentals and houses to purchase were considerably less expensive.[72] However, as the cost of housing in Tremont escalated, population growth between 1980 and 1990 was limited to 6.6 percent (Tremont Comprehensive Plan, [TCP], 1997:A-1 and A-2). The town has attracted less development than other parts of the island, as well as fewer tourists and summer residents; it has also lost important assets such as a sardine factory and a summer whaling industry (TCP,1997: G-1, G-2).

TABLE NINE
Average Selling Prices of Residential Units, Tremont and Hancock County

		Sale Volume		Average Price	
Year	**Type of Unit**	**Tremont**	**Hancock Cty**	**Tremont**	**Hancock Cty**
1991	Non-waterfront	14	292	$100,625.00	$ 93,024.00
	Waterfront	3	105	$213,333.00	$150,966.00
1990	Non-Waterfront	17	491	$122,218.00	$105,258.00
	Waterfront	3	147	$310,000.00	$171,075.00
1989	Non-Waterfront	14	498	$101,286.00	$ 94,201.00
	Waterfront	3	171	$299,667.00	$197,619.00
1988	Urban	6	196	$ 99,833.00	$ 91,152.00
	Rural	16	399	$ 80,491.00	$ 76,277.00
	Waterfront	4		$294,000.00	

(Tremont Comprehensive Plan, 1997: Table C-8)

---

[71] Table Eight, showing "Historical Year-Round Population Trends in Tremont," may be misleading as it seems to indicate a larger population between 1885 and 1900. Please note that the population figures from 1900 include residents of Southwest Harbor. Furthermore, categorization of races is arbitrary and may be misleading; however, what is certain is that the people of Tremont are predominantly Caucasian.

[72] This is a phenomenon I observed as a real estate broker on Mount Desert Island from 1981 - 1997.

TABLE TEN
Tax Valuations for Mount Desert Island, Trenton, and Hancock County

TOWN	1994 Estimated Population	1994 State Valuation	1994 Valuation	1994 Tax Spending	1994 Tax Spending
	Total	Total	Per Capita	Total	Per Capita
Tremont	1,394	$138,200,000	$ 99,193	$1,519,806	$1,090
SW Harbor	1,908	$209,050,000	$109,565	$2,886,800	$1,513
Bar Harbor	4,490	$481,100,000	$107,149	$6,459,892	$1,439
Mt. Desert	1,896	$516,900,000	$272,627	$4,399,086	$2,320
Trenton	1,098	$107,500,000	$ 97,905	$1,220,327	$1,111
Hancock Cty	47,963	$4,411,400,000	$ 91,975	$51,081,828	$1,065

(Tremont Comprehensive Plan, 1997:Table M.2)

These two tables show us the inflated value of property on Mount Desert Island in relation to the rest of Hancock County. Table Nine compares the value of waterfront and non-waterfront in Tremont to similar property in Hancock County (of which the island is a small part). This table demonstrates that waterfront property in Tremont sold for much higher prices than did shorefront in the rest of Hancock County, and that interior property was less affected.[73] Table Ten shows that the valuation of property in Tremont is still well below that of the other island towns, resulting in, for instance, per capita spending of less than half that of the Town of Mount Desert.[74]

The map of Tremont, prepared for the Town Comprehensive Plan, shows that population is clustered along Route 102A and in Bass Harbor. Although the small scale makes the map difficult to read, I include it because it does indicate that most of the shorefront has seasonal, not year-round dwellings, suggesting it is owned by summer residents.

As shown earlier, the residents of Tremont have less formal education than citizens of the other towns. According to the 1990 census, the people of Tremont are also the poorest on Mount

---

[73] The drop in value of waterfront sales in Tremont in 1991 probably reflects the impact of the recession, which affected property values throughout New England. Throughout the recession, property on Mount Desert Island retained value better generally than property off the island in Hancock County.

[74] The Town of Tremont hired an appraiser who was not from Mount Desert Island to help in assessing the value of property. Many think the assessments are too high, and my experience in real estate sales is that in many cases property in Tremont sells for less than the assessed valuation.

LEGEND

- ● 2 Unit Apartments
- ● 3 Unit Apartments
- 4 Unit Apartments
- ♦ Acadia National Park
- △ Campground
- ✝ Cemetary
- ✝ Church
- ▭ Commercial building
- ☆ Commercial\Residential
- ⌂ Farm
- ▲ Fire department
- ⚒ Gravel pit
- ▣ Industrial building
- ⚇ Library
- ▲ Low income gov't housing
- ▲ Mobile home
- ⚑ Post office
- ● Public building
- ▲ School
- △ Seasonal mobile home
- ⌂ Seasonal single family residence
- ⬟ Single family residence
- ∕∖∕ Town Line

- ∕∖∕ Property Line
- ∕∖∕ Road
- ∕∖∕ Shoreline
- ∕∖∕ Right of Way
- ▨ State Critical Wetlands
- ■ Lakes and Ponds
- Easements 1996
- Acadia National Park
- Lands of MDI Towns
- Ocean

Town of Tremont

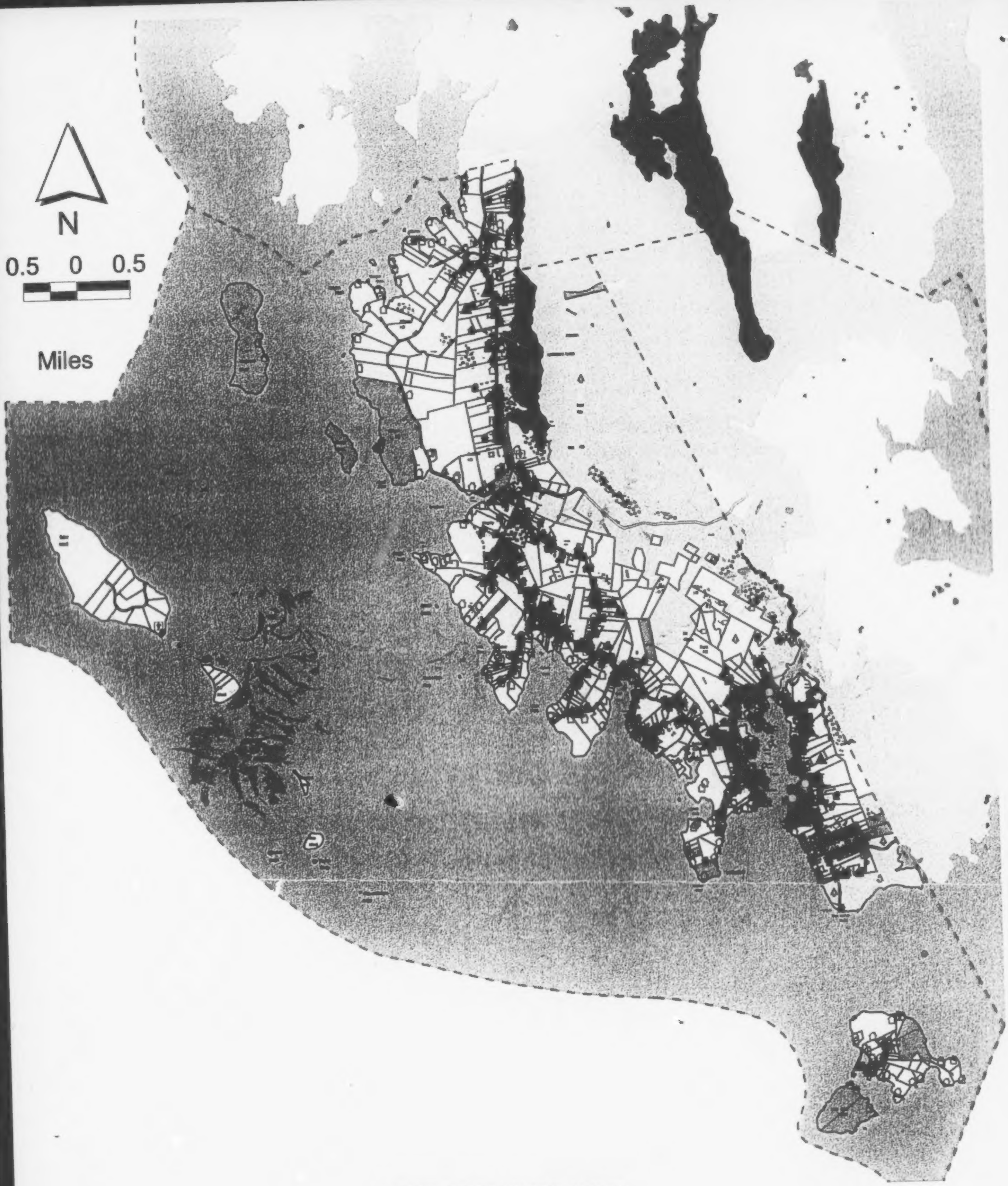
Hancock County, Maine

Land Use and Ownership Map

Prepared for the
Tremont Comprehensive Plan Committee
by the
College of the Atlantic GIS Laboratory
April, 1997

SOURCES:
USGS, Tremont Town Office, Acadia National Park

MAP 6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Desert Island, though the median income has risen relative to that of Hancock County. In 1989 the median income in Tremont was $26,012, slightly above the County median income of $25,247, while in 1979 it was $11,937, slightly less than the county average of $12,146. However, these figures gloss over the higher cost of living on the island, which erodes buying power and erases the current difference of $765. The poverty rate in Hancock County was 15.3 percent in 1979 and dropped to 10.7 percent in 1989 and (slightly over 12 percent for the state). The poverty rate, which is figured on a county wide-level, may not accurately reflect the number of people who find it difficult to meet their needs in Tremont due to the higher costs of living on Mount Desert Island, particularly for housing. Poverty in Tremont was highest among single mothers and the elderly.

Some cohorts, including that of school-age children, have increased more than others. Although there was a decrease in the number of school-age children in Tremont between 1970 and 1990, school enrollment increased from 153 students in 1990 to 181 in 1996. The largest increase in a cohort seems to have been in the age group 18 - 44, which increased 70 percent (324 persons) between 1970 and 1990 and now accounts for 41 percent of the population (Table Eleven). This probably reflects a move to the least expensive area of the island and, though promising for Tremont, is a fragile gain since this age group is pressured by heavy expenses (including a high tax rate on property and increasing property values), which may encourage some people to sell. There has been only a 19 percent increase in the population between 45 - 64, in comparison with a 24 percent growth in this part of the population in Hancock County. This may be due to the fact that Tremont has no real "center" or village to provide some of the amenities older citizens might prefer. Between 1970 and 1980 the number of residents over age 65 increased by 62 persons, but by only four persons between 1980 and 1990, for an overall increase of 48 percent. It is hard to know whether this was due to economic factors or to the coincidence of the cohort's aging to the next category because the sample is so small and there has been no research to explain the data (TCP, 1997:A-5).

But perhaps most important, Tremont is a community of long associations and many interconnections. My interviews confirmed what I learned long ago, that everyone knew everyone else and was probably connected by kinship, so it was best to be extremely discreet. People who once went to school together will still be friends; people who work together may be related or at least have known each other all their lives. The stability of the population has allowed roots to grow and intertwine - creating a web of connection for many families that creates even more reason for members to remain where they are.

TABLE ELEVEN
Age Distribution: Tremont and Hancock County, 1970, 1980, 1990

	Age	**1970**	**Percent**	**1980**	**Percent**	**1990**	**Percent**
TREMONT	< 5 years	77	8%	81	7%	97	7%
	5-17 years	239	24%	230	19%	207	16%
	18-44 years	322	32%	470	38%	546	41%
	45-64 years	227	23%	260	21%	270	20%
	65 years +	138	14%	200	16%	204	15%
	Total	1,003	100%	1,241	100%	1,324	100%
HANCOCK COUNTY	< 5 years	2,652	8%	2,610	6%	3,205	7%
	5-17 years	8,491	24%	8,409	20%	8,130	17%
	17-44 years	10,912	32%	15,865	38%	19,057	41%
	45-64 years	7,596	22%	8,465	20%	9,401	20%
	65+ years	4,939	14%	6,432	16%	7,155	15%
	Total	34,590	100%	41,781	100%	46,948	100%

Source: Tremont Comprehensive Plan, Table A.2 (from U.S. Census, 1990)

As mentioned earlier, an unusual pattern of child-raising in Tremont, though it used to be more prevalent, still shows the extraordinary connections between generations. In 1993 I was surprised to learn from the Principal of Tremont School that several of the students in that year's graduating class had been brought up by their grandparents, even through their parents, lived nearby, and were fully capable of raising them. There is a tradition in Tremont and other island communities of sending the oldest grandchild to live with his grandparents and help with chores when he is about five years old through conversations with several older people.[75]

B: Val [the principal of Tremont School] told me later many of the kids had been raised by their grandparents and that in the old days the oldest grandchild would go to do chores.

Mrs. M.: That is true.

Mr. M.: Yes, it makes sense.

Mrs. M.: Yes.

Mrs. M.: I didn't realize it was happening like that....I didn't realize it was still around that much now.

B: Usually the grandson?

Mr. M. : Yeah, generally the grandson because he could do the chores.

It seems an extraordinary statement of cultural continuity that parents feel comfortable having their own parents, who were raised in a different era, raising their children.

New people moving into Tremont, whether they be from the island or "away," have brought ideas and patterns of living with them. A long-time resident notes these changes: "The changeover has been really great. There have been a lot of people and all the new developments - the little plot here and there. It will be changed completely in another ten years." When I asked this man what kind of changes he saw, he replied, "It depends on whether they want it to be like it used to be or like where they come from." The two older residents explained further:

> Mrs. M.: One thing we do notice more than ever now, we just don't know the people....Even ten years ago if you went up and down the road, you knew everyone. We don't know anyone anymore except our own families and a few scattered along here that have always lived here. Many of the older ones, of course, have died off and families have come in and bought the property up, which is great...but there isn't the closeness.
>
> Mr. M.: It was different than it is today. We knew everybody and everybody worked together. Firewood, for example, people would help each other, get a crowd, pile the wood, and in late spring they would manufacture it into stove lengths...working bees....This was a genuine community. This was the way we were brought up, just the way we were brought up, to help each other.

---

[75] I first learned about this tradition from an older woman whose eldest grandson had lived with her and her husband for many years. I later confirmed the existence of this pattern of child-raising in discussion with several informants.

All memory is selective. People tend to sieve out memories of enmities and misdeeds, but it is important that the ideal people in Tremont value is a close connection with friends and family.

ECONOMY

Tremont is thought of as a fishing village; however, relatively few residents (less than 8.6 percent) are engaged directly in fishing, which includes lobstering. However, marine resources are threatened by even the diminished numbers of fishermen.

> Tremont has had a marine-resource based economy throughout its history, with activities and facilities changing as the economy and resources have change. At various times, the town has hosted an [sic] summer whaling industry, sardine canneries, and a cold storage plant. The town also once had a clam factory and a salted fish operation.
>
> Today, the marine economy focuses on lobsters, crabs, scallops, and sea urchins. In 1994 there were 65 Class-I lobster and crab licenses issued in Tremont. Clam harvests and fin fishing, however, have declined dramatically in recent years.
>
> This decline is due to both poor water quality and an over-harvesting in the past.
>
> While data for mussels are limited, a similar decline has taken place. Local observers note that the crab supply is decreasing also and appears to have been overfished. The lobster supply has remained adequate. [TCP, 1997:G-1,G-2]

TABLE TWELVE
Estimated Employment Breakdown
per 1995 Public Opinion Survey

Occupation Type	Number	Percent
Fisheries, Agriculture, Forestry	57	12%
Construction	59	13%
Manufacturing, Nondurable Goods	14	3%
Transportation	8	2%
Communication, Other Public Utilities	6	1%
Wholesale Trade	5	1%
Retail Trades	40	9%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	19	4%
Business and Repair Services	31	7%
Entertainment and Recreation Services	21	5%
Other Professional and Related Services	189	41%
Public Administration	10	2%
Total	459	100%

(TCP, 1997: Table B.3

These declines foreshadow changes Tremont residents will have to make in the ways in which they earn a living, which will also affect the image residents have of themselves. Just as the myth of the cowboy pervades the range in the West, and that of the "cow man" the dairy lands of upstate New York (Fichten, 1991), so the mythology of lobstering and fishing colors the ethos of Tremont.

The sea continues to offer a way of life and livelihood for the people of Tremont, though in recent years the number of residents who make a living from fishing has diminished. The "abundant resources of the sea" formed the base of the economy in Tremont until the late 1800s and lumbering and boat-building were important mainstays. However, "employment and population began to decline in the early 1900's, due in part to changes in transportation which opened up new industry and settlement opportunities in interior portions of the country" (TCP,1997:K-2), forces which affected people throughout Maine.

Today a surprising 25.9 percent of Tremont residents are self-employed, in comparison with 15.6 percent in Hancock County and 8.4 percent nationally (TCP, 1997; Cohany, 1996). This reflects, perhaps, the value people in Tremont put on independence, but may also indicate economic vulnerability or lack of other opportunities, which the high rate of unemployment (9 percent in 1993) tends to confirm (TCP, 1997). The high rate of self-employment is also partially due to the availability of construction work and the ease with which someone can enter the business. A large percentage of residents is employed in construction, which reflects the increased demand for housing, particularly seasonal housing, on Mount Desert Island.[76]

Many residents I interviewed talked about the deteriorating job market in Tremont. While I cannot verify that the job market is shrinking, it is significant that people *think* it is worsening. Residents cite the number of businesses and services that have closed down. For example, the Postmistress thinks about the changes she has seen:

---

[76] Again, my experience in brokerage and construction leads me to this conclusion, which is corroborated by Tables Nine and Ten based on data from the Tremont Comprehensive Plan.

TABLE THIRTEEN
Class of Worker, 1990, Employed Persons 16 and Over

	Tremont		**County**		**US Percent**
Category	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Private: wage/salary	427	65%	10,283	66.8%	
Government Workers	63	10%	639	17.2%	
Self-Employed	171	26%	2,405	15.6%	8.4%
Unpaid Family	0	0%	59	4.0%	
Total	661	100%	15,386	100.0%	

(TCP, 1997:B.2, data from U.S. Census). Note the very high percentage of self-employed workers in Tremont in relation to both the national and county percentages.

> B: Is it harder for young people to live here than it was?
>
> Postmistress.: I think probably yes, the sardine factories are gone. Sardine factories...that kept a lot of them here. My brothers when they were growing up - they both worked in the sardine factory.
>
> B: Is there more or less going on here than there used to be in terms of jobs, sardines, boat building, other things?
>
> Postmistress: You could get a job most anywhere at that time; my boys growing up were never without a job - all these places are gone.

The sardine factory employed the most people, primarily women, of any business in Tremont; however, there were others that have also closed.

> Mr. R.: He had a chicken farm, leghorn hens, sold a lot of eggs.
>
> B: Was it a small business - he sold locally?
>
> Mr. R.: No it had - before he got through he sold a lot of his hens and eggs throughout Maine...but the grange put him out of business.
>
> B: Because you are pretty reliant up here on grain - so the grange put him out of business?
>
> Mr. R.: Yes.

Competition from large national companies put some local manufacturers out of business, and more recently, competition with chain stores in the Ellsworth malls has doomed local stores. Mr. R. points out there used to be more local stores because "there weren't as many people going to Ellsworth shopping."

This attrition has also affected many amenities and services that residents enjoyed. A former selectman notes some of the consequences:

> Of course Tremont is the only, the only town on the island that has regressed. We used to have movie theaters, barber shops. Now we don't have anything, even our business is shrinking. Young kids growing up here, what are they going to do in the summer? They are going to go work for Doug, or Johnny, or Blanchard and Gray, or as a lobster stern man, what experience would they have, what insight into anything? 75-80 percent of our budget goes to the school, we don't do anything, nothing, to create any work, anything that will take....Look at the money we put into our students, all our top students, most of them go to the high school, go to college, get a good education. Do they come back to Tremont and work? They go somewhere else and work. No, they can make more money. There is nothing here for them, we lose our top students. After a while, what do you have for your remaining people and your own in your own town? You lose them.

The jobs Tremont students know about affect their decisions about what they will do in the future. This seems obvious and unremarkable, but they learn about the availability of jobs not only through their own experience, but in what they learn through their parents' experience.

Many sources of jobs, such as the sardine factories, have closed in the past twenty years. Even though the work was hard, unpleasant, and poorly paying, the factories did provide jobs, particularly for women. Older people see the local job opportunities in the town diminishing, which they think discourages younger residents of Tremont and shuffles them into the opportunities they can see and experience, such as boat building, caretaking, and fishing, which do not require post-secondary education.

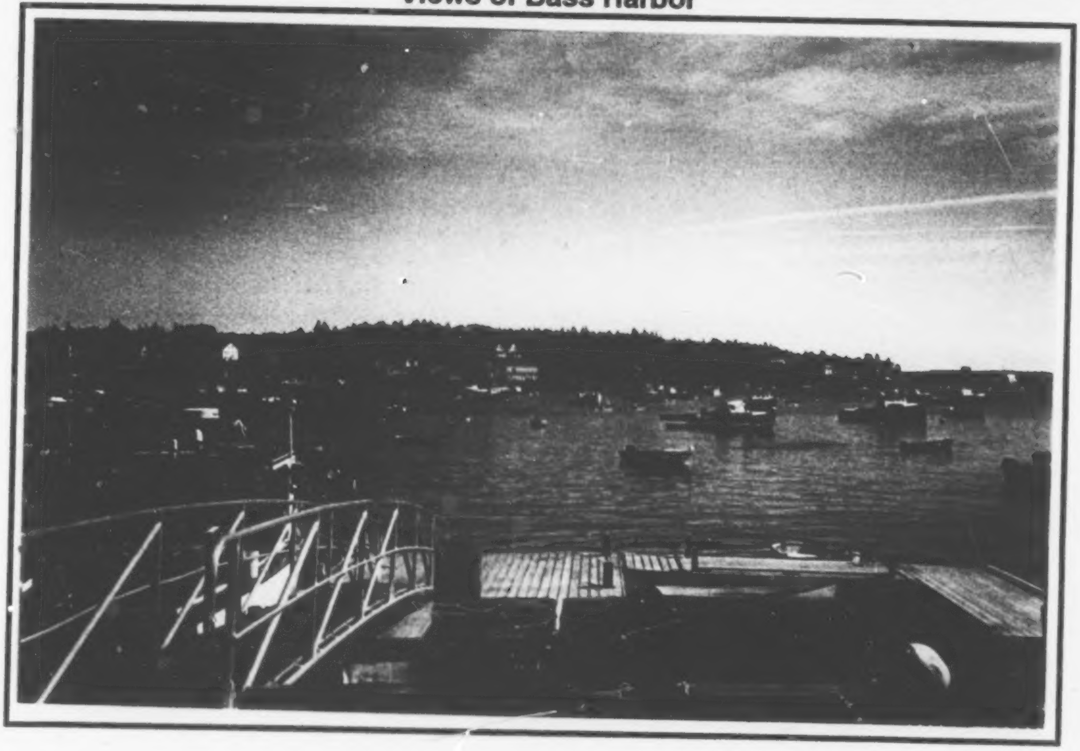
Many children in Tremont have worked with their parents in family owned businesses. As we saw earlier, over 25 percent of Tremont's residents are self-employed (in comparison with 15.6 percent for Hancock County and 8.4 percent nationally). The work of children is important to the viability of these small businesses and also offers opportunities for employment during and after school. The benefits of college or vocational training, particularly as a springboard to a better job, are lost on students who know what work they want to do because they have already been doing it. A college student notes, "When I was younger, I didn't see a whole lot of students with a need for further education. Like it's a tourist sort of place and you see people working in rooms, on boats." And a grandfather thinking about his grandson muses, "He thought he would do just as well working for his father...it just baffles me sometimes."

Land Use

Though there has been increased development in Tremont, it is still largely rural. "Of approximately 12,300 acres of land area, about 3,350 acres (or 27 percent of the total) are owned by Acadia National Park...[and an additional] 679 acres (6 percent of the total) is protected by conservation easements" (TCP, 1997:Table L-1). The authors of the Comprehensive Plan estimate that only 916 acres, or 7.4 percent of the total land, are developed for residential, commercial and public purposes and only that 16 acres are used for other purposes, such as churches, public buildings and gravel pits (TCP, 1997:L-2).

The town encompasses large ponds, with some land protected by the National Park, but the remainder in private hands. Large tracts, most with shorefront, are owned by summer families, some of whom have used them as retreats from their more fashionable properties in Mount Desert and Bar Harbor. Although some of the shorefront land in Tremont is still owned by year-round residents (not all of whom are natives), out-of-state owners control a great deal of this prime property. My experience in the real estate business is confirmed by discussion with town assessors, who state that even in Tremont, shorefront property is owned primarily by people from out of state. Table Fourteen shows that though the value of buildings owned by people "from away" is less than those owned by residents of Mount Desert Island, the value of the land owned by non-residents is higher. In the town of Mount Desert non-residents own a larger number of buildings with higher value on more valuable land than do residents of the town. People in Tremont see the increasing ownership of property in the town by non-residents as a mixed blessing, one which increases tax revenues and property values but makes it more difficult for local families to retain or buy property in Tremont. Though in 1990 77 percent of Tremont residents owned their own house, pressure from outside buyers makes it more difficult for local people to buy property and offers owners increased incentive to sell. In Mount Desert

Views of Bass Harbor



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the children and grandchildren of summer residents have bought non-shorefront property for summer use, making it practically impossible for local people to buy property within the town. This trend is not as advanced in Tremont, but some people are concerned that it may increase. (The figures for non-resident ownership in all towns are under-reported because they are based on the address to which tax bills are sent, and in many cases non-residents have local post office boxes.)

The burgeoning population of seasonal residents also accounts for an increase in taxes and income to the town. The Comprehensive Plan reports that "the number of seasonal homes increased at a much faster rate than year round homes during the 1980s. As of 1990, seasonal homes accounted for just over half of all units in town..." (TCP, 1997:C-1). The Census shows us that between 1970 and 1990 the total number of housing units increased from 597 to 947

TABLE FOURTEEN

Property Ownership on Mount Desert Island

Town	Buildings	Land	Properties
Tremont*			
Resident	$36,597,250	$31,862,300	836
Non-Resident	$23,846,200	$59,605,700	582
Mount Desert			
Resident	$116,962,500	$88,561,100	1305
Non-Resident	$187,704,900	$245,313,500	1352
Southwest Harbor			
Resident	$76,970,600	$55,722,500	1035
Non-Resident	$36,682,000	$53,405,200	527

Information from Town Assessors. No data available for Bar Harbor.
* Tremont data from tax year 1996 - 97. Other data from 1997- 98.[77]

Even with some miscounting, the trend in an increased number of units does reflect other trends, such as a decrease in family size coupled with an increase in population and an incredible 53.2

---

[77] The authors of the Comprehensive Plan are concerned that the census may be inaccurate, primarily due to the difficulty in differentiating between seasonal and year-round homes that might have been unoccupied (there was a school vacation during the time the census was taken and some year-round residents may have been away) [TCP, 1997:C-2].

percent swelling of the seasonal ownership of property in Tremont that has forced real estate values up markedly.[78]

Governance, Facilities and Services

The Town is served by a town manager, a manager's assistant, a person in charge of public works, and a town clerk. In addition, there is a part-time planning assistant, an animal control officer, a code enforcement officer, a harbor master, and a health officer. These officials work out of a small but modern facility.

There is a twelve person Volunteer Fire Department; the Hancock County Sheriff's Office staffs an officer in Tremont in the summer only; and ambulance service is shared with Southwest Harbor, where the ambulance is stationed. The Bass Harbor Memorial Library houses approximately 12,000 volumes, with a yearly circulation of between 2100 and 3000 volumes (TCP, 1997:E-8 - E-9).

Acadia National Park

The impact of Acadia National Park on Mount Desert Island is inestimable. Even though the western side of the island receives fewer visitors, and the impact, both positive and negative, of tourists is considerably less than it is on the other towns, it is important to know a little about the history and dimension of the park.

In August, 1901, Charles Eliot, President of Harvard University, wrote friends that he wanted to convene a meeting of people interested in protecting land in Hancock County, and particularly on Mount Desert Island. On January 1, 1903, this group, which included such wealthy summer visitors as William Schieffelin, John Kennedy, George Vanderbilt, Bishop William

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[78] The Plan reports that many year-round residents have purchased mobile homes instead of traditional single family houses, again due to increased costs of land and housing. Between 1980 and 1990 there was an increase of 55 mobile homes in the town, or a rise of 129 percent. Since 1974, mobile homes have been built to meet stricter standards and offer a better alternative than older mobile units; however, they are still less preferable than single family houses.

Lawrence of Massachusetts, and George Bucknam Dorr, obtained a charter as a public service organization that could accept tax free donations. Its purpose was to "acquire, by devise, gift, or purchase, and to own, arrange, hold, maintain, or improve for public use lands in Hancock County, Maine, which by reason of scenic beauty, historical interest, sanitary advantage or other like reasons may become available for such purpose" (Collier, 1978:91).[79] By 1916 the federal government had accepted 6000 acres of land acquired by the trust as Sieur de Monts National Monument, and by 1919 it conferred the status of a National Park, calling the land Lafayette National Park. In 1929 the park was renamed "Acadia" (Hill, 1996:97,102).

Through the efforts and generosity of many friends of Acadia, particularly George B. Dorr, Acadia National Park now protects over 35,000 acres of land on Mount Desert Island, Schoodic Point, and Isle au Hauts, as well as other outer islands. The park employs many people and attracts about three million visitors each year.[80] Although no land on the western side of the island was donated to the park until after 1935, today 27 percent of the land in Tremont is now included.

There is tension in Tremont, as well as in the other island towns, between native-born residents and the National Park over such issues as prohibition against deer hunting, removal of land from the town tax base, and a surprising belief that the National Park ultimately wants to take all privately held land and remove residents from the island. These fears surface in discussions about limited opportunities for business and industry on the western side of the island, about poaching on the island, or about the high rate of taxes, and were particularly bitter when the park was negotiating with local residents to purchase land for clarification of its boundaries (The Bar Harbor Times, 1986).

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[79] There are many excellent accounts of the history of Acadia National Park to which I refer the reader, including Collier's "Mount Desert Island and Acadia National Park, an Informal History"; Hill's "Discovering Old Bar Harbor and Acadia National Park," and several publications by The Friends of Acadia, as well as by The Park itself.

[80] Officials at Acadia National Park changed the way visitors were counted, as they feared they had been including year-round residents. The "old" figures ranged from 4 - 5 million annual visitors. The new calculation was 2,845,378 for 1995 and 2,704,831 for 1996, which had an unusually rainy summer (Ranger's Office, Acadia National Park, February 13, 1997).

Left out of these discussions is the positive impact of the park in preserving land that attracts visitors for recreation and that might otherwise have fallen to development offering short-term benefits but long-term problems. The increased value of properties that appeal to summer residents is a result of the park's protection; however, as we have seen, this has raised the value of year-round houses and made living on the island difficult for native-born residents.

Although there is a great deal of open space in the Town of Tremont, and considerable access to pond, lake, and ocean frontage (largely due to its acreage within Acadia National Park), Tremont has not attracted the enormous numbers of tourists that seem to overwhelm the three other towns during the "season." This is both good and bad news. The town has not had the expenses and difficulties the three other towns have had, but neither has it enjoyed as much income from tourism-based enterprises. One reason for this, as mentioned earlier, is that the public roads, including park roads, do not go within sight of the ocean and most tourists and tour operators do not bother to go down the small roads that follow the many small peninsulas or "points." However, as other parts of the island "fill up," and as areas of the park within the other towns are over-used, Tremont may receive more overflow of tourists and summer residents looking for less crowded (and less expensive) recreation.[81]

Summer people

The influence of the summer community seems more benign than in the more affluent resort towns of Northeast Harbor and Seal Harbor, in part because self-selection has attracted people who appreciate the lack of pretension of life in Tremont. In other island towns one often hears disparaging remarks about summer residents and visitors, perhaps because the dependence of the year-round residents on the summer community is so enormous and the social distance between the two communities can seem like a chasm.[82]

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[81] Data from personal observations as well as discussion with Park personnel and Town Assessors, 1994 - 1997. In addition, the Maine Department of Transportation does traffic counts which, as reported in the Tremont Comprehensive Plan, indicate the following data for 1993: the estimate of Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) was 2,810 vehicles on Route 102 in Tremont, very low in comparison to Bar Harbor's AADT of 15,593 and Hancock's AADT of 13,489. The report continues: "the same location on Route 102 in 1972 was 1,130, less than half the 1993 amount. This is an average annual increase of 4.4 percent between 1972 and 1993. Furthermore, the annual rate increase is greater for recent years than for earlier years; between 1988 and 1993 there was a 5.6 percent annual rate of increase in traffic. Other roads in Tremont showed similar increases (TCP, 1997:D-5).

People who are drawn to summer in Tremont may enjoy great wealth, but they do not seem to create that same distance between themselves and the year-round population. The following comments of year-round residents of Tremont are typical.

> B: How do people feel about summer people?
>
> Lena: I don't think there has been so much said about the summer people in this little area. I don't know what it is like in other parts of the town, most of the people here are quite generous in helping the kids go to college.
>
> B: Oh - so how would that work, for instance, for the child of someone who works for them?
>
> Lena: That has happened several times.
>
> B: That is interesting, I wonder if the summer people talk with the child about going on to college.
>
> Lena: Yes they do, they do. You find that the summer people stop and talk, they are very nice, I think. They are good people and lot of them [who] do work for summer people, they do talk to them a lot.
>
> B: So it doesn't sound like there are the same feelings over here.
>
> Lena: Right, [my grandson] took a lot of books given to him by an anonymous person - he gets them in the mail all the time - they show up, nice typewritten note in it.
>
> B: Does it seem to follow his interests?
>
> Lena: Apparently he has talked with him, he wants to be a mystery writer and the books are always mysteries.

An older couple who own the local crab shop add:

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[82] There is more mixing of younger people in Bar Harbor and Northeast Harbor. In those towns the elementary schools have a higher percentage of families "from away," and in summer, year-round people also mix with students from out-of-state who are there to work. Often the children of the local "gentry" or of people "from away" are links between the summer and year-round groups. Also, there is a local "youth culture" in the larger towns (that Tremont lacks), which increases the exposure of young people, particularly from the eastern side of the island, to outsiders.

> Shirley: The best part of that business is seeing the same people come back year after-year, some of these people are the dearest people - every year, some people come here before they go to their summer house.
>
> John: Year after year. They come drive in and come get their crab meat.
>
> Shirley: We get Christmas cards year after year. I love the people.
>
> B: That is wonderful.
>
> John: Sixteen years.

However, summer people are seen as wielding enormous influence in curtailing development, even though they cannot vote in the town elections.

> B: I know you know the summer people, what effect if any do they have on it [business development]?
>
> Postmistress: They have a big bearing on it - keeping businesses out, I think.
>
> B: Keeping businesses out? They can't vote.
>
> Postmistress: They put their opinion in, and I think it is being heard. They don't want to upset the summer people, I suppose they do leave a lot of money here.

A middle-aged man talks about the negative effects on the local economy:

> Wayne: There is nothing right here basically now for me to stay here. I want to stay here, the town is getting to the point, the businesses gone, becoming another Bar Harbor or Northeast Harbor. The landowners, moneyed people can afford to buy the places on Dodge Point, that is what it is going to become. They are going to drive us out. Look at all the young people living in Ellsworth, Trenton, because they can't afford to live on the island....How many young generations of kids have lived here, fathers have fished here, being forced off the island because they can't afford the taxes?

And a young woman who is a student at the high school states:

> Samantha: I don't want this to become Bar Harbor. I had a friend of mine, a teacher, he is building a house, not on MDI, says it is too expensive so he can't buy land.

The balance of ownership and power in the town is definitely changing.

Prejudice

One way to understand what it means to grow up in Tremont is to realize that people in the other towns still use the pejorative term "backsiders" to describe people from the town. For decades people from the other towns have thought of "backsiders" as "hicks," "nothing but fishermen," and "sort of uncivilized." A great-grandfather from Tremont remembers: "when we were kids, they called us backsiders," and the term is still used. When I moved to Mount Desert Island and heard people from other towns talk about people in Tremont, what they said puzzled and almost frightened me; at first it deterred me from looking for property in Tremont. Such prejudice still colors what people think and affects the image Tremont students have of themselves. I believe this prejudice is diminishing, but it is still common in the conversation of older people to hear the frustration and hurt in their voices about being looked down on by people from the other towns, even when the success of students from Tremont in academics and athletics belies such slurs.

One mother notes the change by making a comparison to two older men in the community who did not know each other growing up because they lived on opposite sides of the harbor: "Across the harbor then is like across the island now." A former selectman says:

> When I went to school in Southwest and we came from Tremont, you got the feeling you were strangers and you feel like you are outclassed, like you come from a lower class neighborhood. But I think if you go back and you look at the number of students, there were only 37 in my class, but I think if you look at the number of students and check the grade averages you would find kids from Tremont held their own pretty damn good.

An experienced administrator adds:

> I think that is true, they did, and in the honor class there were long stretches when the valedictorian in Pemetic and honor class came out of Tremont.

Though diminishing, the prejudice other people on the island express about "backsiders" does affect students from Tremont and is a factor in their concept of themselves.

Then and Now

Perhaps it is "natural" for older people to complain of changes they see in the younger generation and to lose the sharpness of bitter memories by replacing them with the opiate of sweet revision. However, people in Tremont see changes that are happening quickly, and the frowning "older" generation now includes people who graduated from high school only a few years ago.

Many people decry changes they see in the "way of life" in Tremont which they think affect students and their thinking about post-secondary schooling. A mother, father, and daughter who is still a student at the high school, talk about these changes.

Mother: There was so much to do.

Daughter: There is nothing to do in Tremont for little kids anymore.

Father: Back then you didn't have Nintendo and Jumping Java. We went out and we could take and leave the house on a Saturday morning, tell Mum we would be back 5 o'clock that night. 'Course then you could go across town, you wouldn't have to worry about someone snatching you off the street.

Daughter: Even up to eighth grade we'd do that, we would ride our bikes around Bass Harbor, we go out to school and hang out on the playground, the teacher used to come walk by us, now if they see us out there they go to see why you are there.

Mother: And they don't want you there because there is so much trouble.

Daughter: So much trouble.

Father: We used to invent games, just go out.

Mother: Neighborhood basketball, baseball, ice skate, how many kids ice skate? Everyone ice skated when we were kids.

Daughter: When we were little we used to go to the pond behind the light house. I haven't done that in years.

Father: It has gotten now where instead of having parental supervision you have the stupid television....What is it? Karate Kid chop 'em up shoot 'em down.

Mother. Used to be too there were not things on TV - games that were oriented towards kids - kids did kids' things, and if there was not Barbies, Match Box cars, they were outside finding things to do, building camps, riding bikes, things like that. Nowadays there is too much inside for the kids to do.

B: In terms of TV?

Daughter: Other than going outside.

Mother: There's computers, the games, the shows. A little kid from three years old on up could watch a TV show from the time they get up to the time they go to bed. What is that doing? Shows for kids - not just violence - that is encouraging the kids to sit down and watch TV. As long as they are doing that, the parent doesn't have to be a parent, the TV can be the parent for a while, or the Nintendo or the computer. It gives the parents a break,

> which I admit I do it too, play Nintendo for awhile, it gives you a break but it is a cop-out. It is not the way the world should be, but it is the way the world is.

Parents are more protective of their children than parents of previous generations because they perceive dangers people did not confront even ten years ago.

New dangers are hard for people to comprehend:

> Mother: I think one thing that makes the parents emphasize the kids' being leery is, especially in the town of Tremont, there is mega amounts of drugs being sold, everyone in this town knows where the drugs...
>
> Daughter: Exactly.
>
> Mother: Are being sold and there is a lot of it here, Barbara, a lot.
>
> Daughter: There is, there is a lot.
>
> Mother: You don't want your kids out walking the streets because they are out walking the street or they gotta walk by these houses, and you see the crowds walking in and out. Some of them are very respectable people, so to speak, but you've got your people you can't trust. There is a lot of violence in Tremont now, some of it we see, some of it we never hear of, but it is still there. You hear of outside, in Ellsworth or Bangor, a kid being snatched off the streets. It takes its effect down here. We are not immune. We know people can drive down here.

In cities, where people are more used to such problems, they have created alternative recreation for children: Halloween Parties instead of Trick or Treat, or after school activities instead of free time to explore and play games. In Tremont there are few such alternatives.

Students, even in large cities, complain that there is nothing to do, so it is not surprising when students from Tremont do also. It is interesting to note, however, that people of their grandparents' generation walked long distances, as there were no busses and few automobiles, in order to get to games and other social activities. In any case, teenagers now say "there isn't anything for us to do. No stores. No place to hang out. At Tremont you go home, and you are home....We need a rec. center. We need some civilization, some place to hang out, some place to play ping pong." And it is true that the town lacks a center, having neither a central downtown, nor a place for teenagers to congregate and socialize.

Some people worry that young people are less well educated and motivated to work than their parents. The son of a man who owns a successful contracting business and who is now its manager discussed this with me:

> B: When we have talked about what kids think about doing after high school, several people have said ..."If you grow up in Tremont, you know there are certain things you can do: you can fish, you can caretake, you can work for [a large earth-moving contractor]." So I wondered how many work [here], because its not like you can employ the town. When you are hiring, do you get many...young men from Tremont ?
>
> Henry: No, two from Tremont, more from Bar Harbor than Tremont. I mean, we have had a lot of people here that was from Tremont, kids growing up and in high school and whatnot, and actually the last three to four years we haven't had a high school kid even ask for a job, and before that, jeeze you would have four to five every year that would want to work in the summer.
>
> B: Why do you think that is?
>
> Henry: I don't know. I had one kid who was from Southwest and wanted to work last summer, but he didn't want to work, his father wanted him to work. When we got done the interview - I thought he was interviewing me, not me interviewing him - and he said he would let me know and then he come back, said he was going to work....He came in two days, and after says, "I don't want to work anymore, only reason I come is my father wanted me to."
>
> B: Any other ideas about why?
>
> His wife answers:
>
> Amy: The work is so physical and I don't think people are used to it in the way they were. We have a lot of young kids, for one thing they don't know how to make out an application...and they will come and work for a short period of time and then go. I don't think they realize what labor means.
>
> B: And then the question is what else are they going to if they can't read and write properly to fill out an application, then where else are they going?
>
> Amy: We have had kids that are good and willing to learn, but then we have had some who are not, you have to repeat it over and over, and I do not know where that is coming from.
>
> Henry: That is not so much local people right here as it is people from down Hancock, Sullivan way, and I am sure it is probably from homes that haven't had anything and might not have brought the kids up to teach them about the world.

People of all ages expressed concern about the passivity, lack of seriousness, and diminishing work ethic they see in younger people. Perhaps we can discount this as the way people from one cohort usually stereotype those in another, or perhaps these people have noted changes in the local culture of which we should be mindful.

Veterans:

It is significant that grandparents who themselves had not gone to college, but who learned complex vocational skills during their service in the Armed Forces during World War II, seem to value post-secondary education highly. The three older men I interviewed who had served in World War II were in some ways more cosmopolitan and aware of the importance of college or vocational training than their grandchildren, who have had fewer chances to explore the world off the island. These men received training during their years of service that taught them specific skills, such as mechanical engineering, radar operation, or airplane construction, skills comparable to those received in post-secondary vocational training. One veteran describes his experience:

> I went to a trade school after and studied to be a machinist. I worked at Gotts for several years; in the meantime World War II started. I was drafted to war and then got married before I went in January - went in the service in March. During my period there I had a brother and brother in law that was drowned, down on the landing....My father being used up [crippled] the way he was - he couldn't do the farm work. So I applied for a discharge and got it, so I was only in the service fourteen months. My outfit went overseas just before I got discharged. I was a combat engineer in Mississippi, then an opening came to be a medical technician. I worked over at general hospital and got qualifications for medical technician, still got a lot of hours. Then I came back and worked at the boatyard for a while, and I worked different contractors in building, decided to go on my own, and which I did for about the last 35 years.

Principal Perkins and several experts I interviewed also think the generation that served in World War II had more exposure to the world away from Mount Desert Island and Tremont and sometimes seems to have more vision than people who are much younger.[83] Table Six shows that approximately the same percentage of the population that served in the Civil War served in

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[83] Principal Perkins noted that many men who had served in the Armed Forces were able to take advantage of the GI Bill and continue their education. However, unfortunately, the Department of Defense does not have the figures to confirm this.

World War II. However, casualties constituted a much lower percentage of the total population, so the effects were less devastating.

As of 1992 there were 6410 veterans, 5010 of whom had served during wartime, who lived in Hancock County. Of these, about 2100 were World War II veterans (Correspondence, Office of Maine Veterans' Services, 1997). Table Fifteen shows that many men from the island served in the Armed Forces during wartime, particularly during World War II (over 13 percent of the people of Maine served in World War II). These people returned to civilian life with skills learned during their years of service and many took advantage of the education benefits offered by the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, better known as The GI Bill. So many people financed college education through this bill that it affected the university system.

> David Smith, a professor of history at the University of Maine, who has written extensively about the postwar era, said that the Bill had a 'profound impact on Maine's land grant university. Enrollment at the Orono campus quickly jumped to more than 10,000 students....Those guys had a lot of years to make up. Their experiences overseas had a profound impact on how they viewed the world....'" [Day, 1994:A2]

Unfortunately, recipients of these benefits are not tracked by town so we do not know how many veterans from Tremont took advantage of the education portion of the GI Bill.[84]

TABLE FIFTEEN
Military Service by Residents from Island Towns

War	Bar Harbor		Mt. Desert		SW Harbor		Tremont	
	Served/Killed		Served/Killed		Served/Killed		Served/Killed	
WW I	270	6	86	4	31	1	41	4
WW II	567	9	231	7	174	0	107	1
Korean	171	1	106	1	66	0	48	0
Vietnam	184	1	72	1	88	0	40	0

Note: Data by mailing address. Some residents get their mail in towns other than the one in which they live. Data courtesy of Office of Maine Veterans' Services, 1997.

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[84] Several older members of the community, as well as experts in education, pointed this out to me; however, I was not able to confirm the number of participants in benefit programs for education though the Office of Veterans' Services, or any other source.

With this introduction to the Town of Tremont, let us look at schooling in Maine and on Mount Desert Island, and the ways it affects students from Tremont.

SKETCHES OF TREMONT

FOUR PORTRAITS

The Clerk

The hardware store where the young man tends the counter is owned by his uncle, a kind, hard-working man who offered him a job when he found himself about to be a father. The store is open year-round, though it caters to summer people and visitors and just breaks even in winter. The store carries charts for yachtsmen and expensive boat trinkets to lure them in while they are on shore, as well as copper bottomed pots and pans, trivets, corkscrews, and garlic crushers for the summer crowd who have to replace things in the cottage and haven't got time to go to Walmart's in Ellsworth. But it also carries ice-fishing bobbers and has a bottle of hard-boiled eggs in vinegar on the check-out counter. It is a place where everyone knows everyone else and how they connect to the community, or that they don't really - a friendly, family-owned business with a reputation for fair prices and competent service. But still, as the young man says, "Hardware isn't the funnest business."

He is tall, with dark hair and eyes, a handsome man who smiles easily but whose words betray some sense of loss. Happy enough for now, he wonders if he might have gone to college and what he might have been.

"I wanted to study English. I thought about being a teacher. But then I met a girl. I had a hard time in junior year and I decided to go into the business track. But now I wish. Well - I just wonder."

We talk in the Town Library because he lives about an hour away. They had wanted to stay on the island, but now he says almost convincingly "I really have the best of both worlds. I get to be on the island, but we live far enough away for privacy. I get to see my family, but my wife and I can have our own time with the kids."

As he talks, I hear wistfulness in his voice - and determination to make the best of a life that is good, with people he loves, but in which he will always wonder what else he might be doing.

Great Grandmother

The woman is old, but with the energy of someone much younger. Birdlike, with small delicate bones and wispy gray hair feathered around her face, her dark eyes dart around the room, though her frail hip confines her to a chair. There are many pictures of her family on the dark brown paneled walls, so many memories in her mind - a mind as active as the hands that ply the air punctuating her words.

The house is immaculately clean, each object placed carefully as if in a museum, a porcelain ballerina in pink tutu, a glass slipper filled with trailing ivy, a fancy cut glass bowl with plastic fruit and framed photographs: her wedding, her son in the army, her daughters' weddings, her granddaughter in second grade, and her new great grandson. The afghans are bright against the dark living room furniture, and the hooked rug warms the old wood of the farmhouse floor.

She is plain spoken - and funny. Few pretensions escape her needle of wit and she does not tolerate fools or laziness easily. Nor does she dwell on the rocks life has placed in her way: lung cancer, her husband's stroke, hip replacements, and very little money. But her hands give her away. Hands with angry red knuckles swollen against the tightly drawn white skin. Rough hands that scratch like sandpaper when you clasp them in handshake. These are hands that have known hard work cleaning bathrooms at the school at night, washing floors in summer cottages, picking the meat from thousands of reluctant crabs, raising five children. These are tough hands, tough with love that has helped get five children through college so that their hands can do lighter work, work with pencils and computers.

High School Girl

A senior now, she seems much younger: shy, heavy set with long brown hair, dark eyes, clear skin, and a smile that lights her face with the sweetness of a child. She is wearing overalls of faded denim, a blue turtleneck shirt and a heavy sweater. She drives her own truck - a second hand red Chevy she bought herself. At first she is hesitant, letting her parents talk - but then slowly, as she feels more comfortable, she joins us - joking with her parents and me, agreeing and disagreeing, stating her thoughts clearly and intelligently. I begin to see how smart she is, how quickly her mind makes connections and draws from her experience. I begin to see how rooted she is in this family and community, how much she loves being here.

She says, "You know Barbara, I didn't know anything about you except, you know, I see your name on the real estate signs, and I thought you were an important, fancy person. But my mother said 'No, come with us, you will like her.' So I did, and I am really happy I did. I haven't talked so much in years."

"Thank you," I answer, wishing she could know how much her words mean to me.

She works two jobs to pay for her expenses and help out at home - she cooks pizza at a local store and she cleans cottages. She says she wanted to go to college - that the teachers at Tremont told her she should go to college and be a teacher. She talks about her nephew who has a learning disability and how she loves to play with him, loves to help him learn to talk. Her mother adds proudly that the little boy, usually so restless, is calm and learns with his aunt.
The girl talks about school and how so many of her friends got into trouble with drugs. She talks about moving from the college to the business track in her junior year, something she decided on her own with no counseling because it made her feel independent and she didn't think she was doing well enough to go to college, and besides, she didn't know how she could afford to go. She says now she doesn't know what she is going to do, that she wants to stay here, but that cooking pizza won't pay many bills. "I am scared really," she adds.

The Caretaker

He is a caretaker, as his father was before him. He hoped his son would follow, but the son left high school fifteen years ago when he was sixteen to work on the fishing boats and help him out occasionally. The caretaker is about to turn fifty - he spent two years after high school at technical school and is proud that his daughter graduated from college.

His hands are blunt, rough-carved from a block of wood, the fingers thick, the palms fleshy, the muscle thick and strong. These are powerful hands that know how to put up wood, build docks and garbage houses, how to fix a lock, to plant a garden, to run a generator, and change the oil in a truck. He wears a green union suit - the name of his business embroidered on the shirt pocket, a thick plaid jacket in winter, and heavy boots scarred from minor accidents that saved their owner's feet. He always has a dog in the truck, sometimes two, which I remember as puppies jumping up and down in the cab, but who are now gray around the muzzle, much like the caretaker.

He manages houses for summer people - families that employed his father before him and who were grateful for the easy transition. When houses sell, the caretaker goes with the house. He knows the properties much better than the owners and, of course, gets to enjoy them for more of the year. The work is hard, but he loves being outside, loves hearing the partridge thrumming in the fall, the loons calling, seeing osprey fishing in the ponds and deer bedding down by the coals he has left for them from the branches of trees he has cut for wood. He knows the land like he knows his own body. He lives in a handsome house he and his wife built, a house of charm, beauty and comfort. He serves on town boards, was a Selectman. He is smart, funny, hard-working, well-read, well-loved, and has much to be proud of.

The Garden

MEMORIAL DAY, 1980

I stand in the newly-tilled garden, feeling the black, damp earth crumbling between my fingers, watching earthworms freed from winter ice lurching across the furrows. Shards of pottery and glass, fragments of rusted wire, cow's teeth, and parts of worn tools push out of the earth. Re-born. My family works with me, tools catching the sunlight, moving rhythmically as we measure, fertilize, and plant our garden. We plant where the farmers had their cow-barn, the soil enriched by years of manure now well composted.

Across the driveway from the garden there is an old cemetery for those farmers, the Blagdons. A white picket fence protects twelve graves, but others lie outside. My own parents died long ago and their graves are far away. I cannot care for them. So I have cared for this abandoned graveyard, pruning the knotted apple trees, yanking back weeds to uncover and set aright the fallen headstones, planting lilacs and lavender. Though the family has a deeded right-of-way through the woods to this plot, in two years I have never seen anyone tending the graves.

An old man I do not know drives onto our gravel road and parks his blue pickup by the graveyard. The sun bounces off the shining chrome and polished paint. I turn away from my garden and walk over to greet him, my hand stretched out to him. "Good morning," I say, "I am Barbara." He stares back at me, his faded green work pants and shirt rumpled, his blue eyes on fire, gristly stubble darkening his jutting chin.

"It's the worst thing that ever happened," he says.

"What," I stammer, my breath caught in my throat, constricting around his words.

He points to the ground and says, "You roto-tilled my mother."

I feel the air rush out of my body. I see the tines of the tiller tearing through graves. I am dizzy and horrified that I could have ordered this desecration. But then I realize my raspberries are seventy-five feet from the nearest grave and his accusation is unfounded, unreal, but real to him.

He turns his back to me and clumps away, his body rigid and awkward. He turns his face and spits behind him, the water catching the light as it arcs down to his land, a benediction and a curse. I watch his back, a strong back, but with sagging shoulders and arms that reach down to the earth. I have nothing to say to him. I will not give him back this land.

I want to know who this man is, so I ask James and Jane, who run the plumbing business and have become my friends. I talk with Tim, our caretaker, whose daughter is our daughter's best friend, and I talk to Bob and Rosemary, the old man's relatives. They tell me that the farm used to stretch around the pond, that the mill was on the far side where you can still hear the stream falling from the mountain, and that the old roads through the woods once brought the cows home to a huge barn, the site I have chosen for my vegetable and flower garden. I have read some of the past in the piles of granite pebbles once loaded onto oxcarts and hauled to the edge of the big field, which later became a place to dump garbage. All that endures is broken plates, rusted pots, and garters. I can see the bones of granite just under the earth arranged in rectangles suggesting sheds and the foundation of a house, blocks sucked crazily back into the hole in the earth.

People tell me he thinks the farm really should have been his, his because a convoluted set of relationships made it his. By marriage, by birth, by rights, it should have been his. But children played with matches, a farmhouse burned down, and the farm was sold, then re-sold, sold again, and then sold to me. It is mine now, though only for a time.

MEMORIAL DAY: 1990

We have declared a truce. He now paints the old fence white; he mows some of the grass; he does not plant plastic flowers. I removed the offending lilacs and lavender and now I have the rest of the grass mowed. I have had the plot surveyed so we know where rights begin and end. He and his relatives, members of the rejuvenated Blagdon Family Graveyard

Association, have allowed me to keep the grape vines that strayed over to their section; I allow them to use the driveway instead of hacking through the overgrown path to which they are entitled.

MEMORIAL DAY, 1994

I work alone in the garden. Now it too is enclosed with a white picket fence; metal silhouettes of cats with green agie eyes patrol the fence posts. It is a very large garden, seventy-five foot square, in which I grow over two thousand lilies and at least twenty-five other types of flowers to give away, to welcome guests to my rental cottages, to enjoy, and sometimes, to assuage the guilt of this expensive hobby, to sell. I have too many gardens and too little time. But each gives me joy to create and pleasure to watch in its growing, much like the joy I feel in watching my children.

When I bought this land, thirty acres on a pond, with views of the mountains, and with diverse habitats: water, marsh, woods, fields, I thought of all the creatures, living and dead, with which I would share it. I found a fox den, otter runs and tracks, a place where pileated woodpeckers adzed their way through old trees. I learned to mark the seasons by the return of the ring-necked duck and tree swallows and the chirruping chorus of chickadees as they changed their song to welcome spring. Black snakes nesting in the fallen blocks of the farmhouse foundation frightened me occasionally, until I grew to think of them as neighbors.

I decided to make a garden of this old foundation, partly because it is at the entrance to the farm, and partly because our summer guests might injure themselves climbing over the rocks. I outlined the space with a hose, arranged for topsoil to be brought and a backhoe to move the boulders, and I bought plants. Into my garden I incorporated the daylilies, rugosa rose, and lilacs that had once bloomed by the door yard of the farmhouse. The color and fragrance harmonized and drew yellow Swallowtail Butterflies to dip their tongues in nectar and ruby blazed hummingbirds that whirred and hovered over invitations from purple blue Tradescantia, peach foxglove, and deep-throated lilies.

Sometimes the old man drove in to tend the graveyard when I was working in my garden. I tried talking, but it was hard to find words. I stumbled and stubbed my toes on them. "Nice day today."

"Ayup."

"Think it will rain?"

"Ayup. Sometime."

"Would you like some dahlias for your wife? I've got lots and lots of them this year. Maybe she'd like some of the tubers when I dig them in the fall?"

"Ayup."

But he took the flowers, and after a while his wife came with him to tend the graves, and she and I talked about children and neighbors, illness, marriages and deaths, and the work I did in the local school.

MEMORIAL DAY, 1995

He drives onto the gravel road and parks the battered blue pick-up by the graveyard. "Baabra," he says. "Mornin', black flies bitin' you, deah? Wicked bad today."

"Yes, George," I reply, "I've got enough 'Skin So Soft' on me to feel like a greased pig, but they are getting to me."

He walks over slowly, his blue eyes soft like old denim pants. He looks at me and points at the garden. "You know," he says. "I like what you've done here. I know you did it to honor the people who came before."

I look up at him and we smile.

CHAPTER SIX

Schooling on Mount Desert Island

By 1776 there were forty-six male settlers on Mount Desert Island and the Cranberry Isles who were entitled to participate in the first meeting of the Mount Desert Plantation. The settlers were "determined that their sons, and in a few instances, their daughters, should not grow up ignorant of the fundamentals of learning" (Somes-Sanderson, 1982:151). At that time teachers were occasionally brought in, but more often a family member taught community children in an informal way. However, at a meeting in 1790 the men voted "eighteen pounds for the support of schools for the present year," which was raised to fifty pounds in May, 1791, and could be "paid in Produce of the Country at the Currant Market Price" (Somes-Sanderson, 1982:151).

The settlers had previously divided the island into ten school districts and agreed to allocate the money raised between the towns "according to the number of scholars in each District that is above four years and under twenty-one."[85] A school agent, at first unpaid and later given a "pittance," visited the schools and "took full responsibility for supervision...checking on teaching methods employed, the general adequacy of the teacher and the progress of the scholars" (Somes-Sanderson, 1982:12). It was the custom to employ a "woman teacher in the spring and a man in the fall, thus showing no partiality" (Hill, 1996:36), which apparently affected students' decisions about whether or not they would attend one or both terms of school a year.

We have a good description of the school in Somesville, at the center of the island, and it must serve to give us an idea of schools in Tremont. Like other village schools, the Somesville school was a small building of one or two rooms which became "an integral part of the community." In contrast to large modern schools, factory-like edifices that impose on their neighborhoods, island schools of the 1800s and early 1900s fit comfortably into their settings due to their less intrusive scale and design. After many of these schools were closed, buyers converted them to residential use and it is impossible now to know they were once schools. Parents and community members were deeply involved with the schools, in part to help keep expenses down. Fathers chopped wood and repaired the building, older boys tended the woodstove, and the teacher was expected to sweep the floor and keep the building "readied up" (Somes-Sanderson, 1982:153). There is no mention of the ways in which women and girls contributed.

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[85] I find it very interesting that, although they narrowed the age span for compulsory education to six through nineteen a few years later, the earliest settlers wanted their children to be in school from age four through twenty-one. This occurred at a time when expected life-span was shorter, though as Marvin Harris has suggested, social and sexual maturation may have happened later than they do now.

> It is estimated that only about fifty percent of Maine children attended school as late as 1870, however, records from the Somesville school show that almost all village children were enrolled. Several children, in fact, attended more than one school "when the terms did not conflict." In part, this record was achieved because the school agents were serious and supported by laws adopted in 1861 stating that "every child and youth between six and seventeen years of age in this Town shall regularly and constantly attend the Town school in the district where such child or youth resides, unless properly engaged in some other regular and lawful occupation. Every violation of this Section may be punished by a fine of not less than one nor more than ten dollars.
>
> Children and youth of this Town within the ages mentioned in the first Section, who shall be guilty of habitual truancy or shall be growing up in willful ignorance without any effort to avail themselves of the Education provided for them by the laws of this State may be punished therefore by a fine not less than ten nor more than twenty (20) dollars." [Somes-Sanderson, 1982:155 - 156]

The community made a commitment to the schools, and parents and their children were expected to fulfill their responsibilities.

The Somesville school offered a basic course of study emphasizing reading, writing, arithmetic, and penmanship. N.L. Luce, writing in the 1840's, noted, "the first objective in teaching reading is to give pupils the power to translate words into ideas. Second, to train them to natural and graceful expressions of ideas by forming correct habits and correcting faulty ones. Third, to train them to clear and distinct enunciation. Fourth, to give power, purity and emphasis of voice. Fifth, to create a taste for reading, both social and solitary" (Somes-Sanderson, 1982:157).

In 1893 the Maine Legislature authorized towns of more than 400 people to maintain a free high school for at least ten weeks a year. Tremont and Southwest Harbor had already established two high schools by 1875; Eden, as Bar Harbor was then named, established a high school, in 1878, Somesville in 1878, and Mount Desert in 1905. Southwest Harbor and Tremont split in 1905, in part due to Southwest Harbor's insistence that the high school be located in its center and not somewhere between the two towns, which would have been more accessible to students from Tremont. Mr. R. remembers being told that people from Tremont said to the villagers of Southwest Harbor that they were "from 'Hungry Corner,' they wanted everything right on their corner. They had the high school right there and one in Seal Cove, and they rotated around. But Southwest Harbor wanted it right on the corner so they had it and that is why the towns separated."

Each community developed tremendous loyalty to its school, which was located in the primary village of the town. Many of the major events of the town took place at the school, such as games, theatrical productions, and town meetings. Townspeople developed great pride in their school, and its students were very much a part of town and village life. A fifth generation resident of Mount Desert, former School Board member, and Boy Scout leader, stated that one of the saddest results of consolidation of the high schools is that "we hardly see the young people anymore because they are up at the regional school." Others point out that children used to go home for lunch and that mothers and fathers would walk back and forth to school with children just for the "company" of it. Parents were much more involved in the village high schools than they can be now that the regional high school is out of walking distance.

As with so many other things, Mainers have held contrasting feelings about education. People in the 18th and 19th Centuries admired the educated, and the level of literacy seems to have been generally higher than it is today. However, Maine people often feigned ignorance, mocked the educated, and saw formal education as making women less marriageable (but necessary for those destined for spinsterhood). Schooling had practical value, and reading, writing, and story-telling were also very important components of recreation.

Reluctant to boast, Mainers were usually self-deprecating in terms of their own accomplishments. Balano found, "I'd better be less proud of my brilliance in the company of these people [Downeasters] who like to act ignorant when they are really quite adept, in their own way, at things that matter to them" (Balano, 1989:59). At the same time, Maine people admired academic achievement. Somes Sanderson tells us that "one of the first considerations of the settlers who came to make Mount Desert Island their permanent home was the education of their children" (Somes-Sanderson, 1983:151).

Expectations and methods for schooling differed from those of the present, but it is interesting that modern educators are adopting many of the methods of schooling used in the 18th and 19th centuries. "School began at the sixth year, but the mother usually taught the child to read after he was about four" (Beam, 1957:89).[86]

> The form of schooling was very different as well. The one-room school had its ways of being as modern as tomorrow. It had no tests, no examinations, no homework, no reports, required no excuse for absence, used no marching or other devices of drill. Children might sit where they liked. They were not promoted from grade to grade annually since there were no grades, only individuals. There was no graduation; pupils merely went to school as long as they wanted to. The only school reward was being known as a good scholar....The schoolroom then always held three groups, the little ones, the intermediates, and the older students. Classes for the oldest and the youngest were fairly fixed, intermediate work was flexible. Children shifted from class to class, reading with one group, doing arithmetic with another, and geography with a third, so that progress was individual. [Beam, 1957:119-120]

Some of the methods that evolved in these small schools are being reinvented by large modern systems. For example, pointing to the small-class size, multi-age grouping, and high degree of parental involvement at his school, the principal of an elementary school on Mount Desert Island once said to me, "We are on the cutting edge because we never changed" (Ashmore, 1995).

Reading was important recreation, which, by its very nature, promoted education.

> Long winter evenings were devoted to the quieter pastimes. Reading and recitations, music and games were all a part of life at the Mountain House. Books, newspapers, and

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[86] See E. D. Hirsch, Jr.'s discussion of Jerome Bruner's remark that "any subject can be taught effectively in some intellectually honest form to any child at any stage of development" (Hirsch, 1996: 81) to learn more about why it makes sense to start teaching young children to read.

> magazines were an important part of the household. Although not numerous, they were carefully selected, including the works of Charles Dickens, Sir Walter Scott, James Fennimore Cooper, and Washington Irving. Jacob Carroll was fond of the poetry of Robert Burns, and he readily quoted from Boswell's life of Johnson and Marcus Aurelius. [Raup, 1993:43-44]

Of the Gilleys, Eliot reports: "they found their pleasure chiefly at home. In the winter evening they read aloud to one another, thus carrying down to another generation the habit which Hannah Lurvey Gilley had established in her family" (Eliot, 1989:32).

Life on ship promoted reading, and many of a crew, particularly the Captains, were very well read. Jewett describes fictional Captain Littlepage:

> 'A shipmaster was apt to get the habit of reading,' said my companion, brightening still more, and taking on a most touching air of unreserve. 'A Captain is not expected to be familiar with his crew, and for company's sake in dull days and nights he turns to his book. Most of us old shipmasters came to know 'most everything about something; one would take to readin' on farming topics, and some were great on medicine, -- but Lord help their poor crews! - or some were all for history, and now and then there'd be one like me that gave his time to the poets. Sometimes I used to think that there was nothing beautiful to me but the stars above the sea, and those passages of verse from Milton and Shakespeare which I had memorized. There's no large-minded way of thinking now. [Jewett, 1981:20-21]

As this implies, reading broadened the narrow perspectives of village life; without it, there is a tendency to atrophy and withdraw.

Few women were really well educated, but it seems that generally women earned a higher level of schooling than men. To go on to college a woman had to struggle against powerful currents in the society. Many believed formal education threatened a man's sense of masculinity and thereby diminished a woman's chance of marrying.

> I was by no means content with my acquired knowledge. What I had learned was thoroughly learned, but it was so little, and I saw boys were sent to college, while the girls of the same age in a family were married and that was the last of them.
>
> I passed many an hour cogitating plans by which I might more fully educate myself, but hesitate to name them, as I could see my mother was planning to marry her daughters, and that, while they were very young [quoting Elizabeth Oakes Smith, 1806 -1893, Maine's first professional literary woman]. [Shain,1991b:25]

Ruth Moore describes this aspect of island life through a character in The Weir:

> I had to fight my own father every step of the way through high school, and most of the men around here think the way he does. 'Boy!' she added with feeling, 'the royal battles we used to have!'
>
> After that [a fight] he gave in, but he never misses a chance to twit me about being educated. He says now I'm a damn freak - I know too much for any man to want,to marry me.'
>
> He's mistaken there,' Leonard said warmly. [Moore, 1986:130]

The threat of spinsterhood hung over young women, with a special catch: if they studied too hard, they would be less marriageable, but if they didn't have an education they would not be able to earn a living if they remained unmarried.

> Since the possibility of spinsterhood was always present, the girls were expected to establish a degree of independence in that eventuality...teaching elementary school was one of the few careers open to women during the 19th century....Although at the time preparation for teaching usually was limited - simply graduating from high school was deemed adequate. [Raup, 1993:39]

For many girls though, even those not bound to being teachers, reading and writing were an important source of recreation, and girls were encouraged to such pleasures, though not to assume that knowledge gave any rights.

Harriet Beecher Stowe, writing about such girls, observed:

> You go into a plain farm house, where the furniture and all the appurtenances retain the most primitive simplicity, but be not surprised if you see Latin, Greek and German books lying on the table. You look inquiringly, and are told perhaps of a certain Mary Ann or Marian who is keeping school up at Umbagog, or some other impossible out-of-the-way place whose books these are. She had long done using them - she got them when she first began; now she has left them for Cynthia or Louisa, or some other fair successor in the family line, who is equally hardy and energetic in her attacks upon the tree of knowledge....You talk with her [Cynthia] and find she has a mind as sharp and bright and keen as one of the quartz crystals among her own mountains. She has been to the academy in the neighboring town....One is struck with the intellectual activity of the Maine women wherever he travels among them. [Shain, 1991b:125]

This pattern persisted, not only in Maine, until the latter half of the 20th Century. I have been told by several people on Mount Desert Island that women were avid readers but some had to hide this habit from their husbands who resented their interests.

The attitude towards educating boys was also contradictory. On one hand, many people read extensively for pleasure and the very well-educated were admired. However, most boys were expected to help support their families and help their fathers by following them into work. Dorothea Balano's husband, Fred, reflected a widely held attitude based, in part, on the realities of survival on subsistence farms and in occupations like sailing and fishing that were very risky. "Fred says there's no reason for Saint George boys to go to college unless they want to be preachers, lawyers, or doctors. He says every boy can make a better living going to sea and that college would spoil good seamen, making nothing but a bunch of sea-lawyers, nautical for trouble-makers" (Balano, 1987:30).

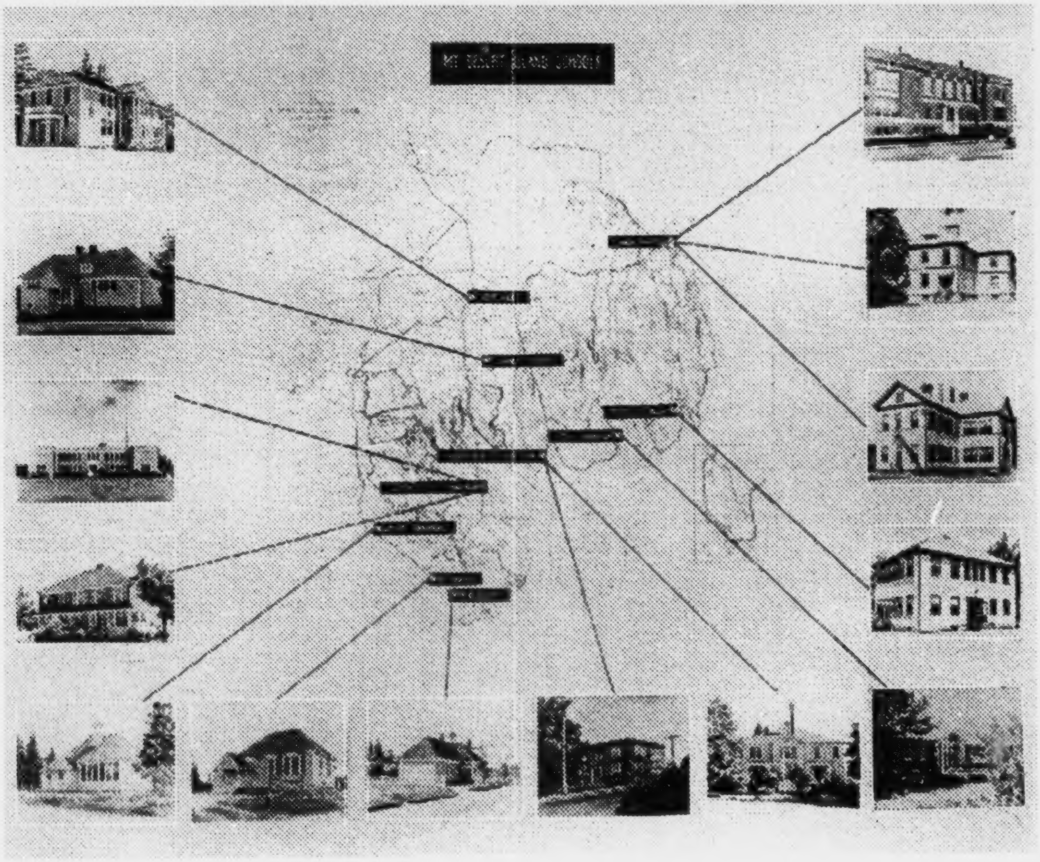
For many boys, particularly those from traditional working families, going to school could be torturous. Their embarrassment and apparent sullenness worked against them, of course, irritating teachers often unfamiliar with this kind of self-defense. Ruth Moore describes such a boy:

> Saylor Comey went to school every day, but it seemed to him that things got worse instead of better. He couldn't get used to the routine, and he couldn't see any sense in what went on. In class he presented a face of bleak and absolute boredom.
>
> Something in the sight of the big sullen fellow, sitting always on the end of his spine and the back of his neck irritated the teachers extremely. No matter what they did to interest or amuse the class, Saylor Comey's face never changed. Miss Rayne, the English teacher, carried the battle to him the first week of school by sending him out of the room for not paying attention. Once she made him go back to the door and come in quietly because his big foot upset a wastebasket - on purpose, Miss Rayne told herself. After that, the hatred between them was cordial and enduring. [Moore, 1986:197]

Similar misunderstandings exist today between teachers and students, particularly between those who come from different cultures. This is confirmed by my own observations in the schools on Mount Desert Island, as well as by John Lofty in his brilliant descriptions of such interactions between students and teachers on Deer Isle.

Schools on Mount Desert Island

In 1948 there were fourteen schools on Mount Desert Island. Each town had its own high school, except Tremont, which tuitioned students to the high school in Southwest Harbor. In addition, there were two elementary schools in Bar Harbor, four serving the town of Mount Desert, two for Southwest Harbor and three for Tremont. Although in 1949 the four towns voted against a consolidated regional high school, each decided to consolidate its elementary schools. In 1951 Tremont opened its new elementary school in Bass Harbor, the largest village in the township.



The Schools on Mount Desert Island before Consolidation[87]

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[87] Shibles, Mark, Director. January, 1948: center.

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This school served children in a large geographic area, requiring those in the villages of Seal Cove and West Tremont to travel at least an hour a day.

Consolidation

In 1967, after twenty years of often rancorous debate, residents voted to consolidate the four island high schools into the Mount Desert Regional High School located on the outskirts of Bar Harbor. In 1993, the Superintendent asked the communities to consider building a consolidated middle school because the aging school buildings in each town required renovation or replacement and because the state had linked funding for such projects to consolidation. Meetings were held in each town and well-attended, particularly in Tremont. Citizens of Tremont adamantly opposed consolidation and told the Superintendent they would not accept a consolidated middle school, and the proposal was abandoned.

When island communities agreed to consolidate the four town high schools, the elementary schools and regional high school, as well as the elementary schools on the outer islands, were included in the newly created Union 98. Under Maine law, a school union is "composed of several school administrative units for the purpose of providing joint administrative services, including a joint superintendent" (MSBA, 1994:2). The Union is administered by a Superintendent working with a curriculum coordinator, his staff, and local school boards.

Each town elects members to the school board who represent a proportional number of residents determined by the Maine Department of Education. Some members also serve on the island-wide board Union Committee that oversees the high school. The school board "may authorize one of its members to act for the school board in the meetings of the Union Committee," which functions only to hire and fire the Superintendent (MSBA, 1994:2,4).

The board for the high school is composed of all members of the union's elementary schools. The State Department of Education sets the number of members allowed to each town based on population. Although members are allowed to send in proxy votes, usually they can register a vote only by being present at meetings. In the past, towns such as Tremont with smaller populations have feared such arrangements because they are easily out-voted unless they form a coalition with another town or towns.

Maine school finance law attempts to equalize money available to municipalities for schooling.

> The intent of the legislature is that at least 55% of the total operating cost of Maine's public school system is paid by the state, with the balance coming from the local districts. This does not mean, however, that each unit receives 55%. Depending on its wealth, a unit may receive a minimum of 5% of the per pupil operating cost, or it may receive in excess of 90% from the state. [MSBA, 1994:51]

This policy creates serious problems for all the towns on Mount Desert Island since their tax base is so high that the schools are only eligible for the minimum state funding of five percent of expenditures for operations. The local property tax must provide the remainder (except for a very small federal contribution), which is a heavy burden for local taxpayers, particularly year-round residents on fixed incomes. Year-round residents, in particular, face the prospect of selling their houses because they cannot pay the taxes. The high valuation that makes their community ineligible for significant state help for education also increases the taxes, making property unaffordable that has been in their family for generations.

A letter to The Bar Harbor Times from a Tremont resident expresses this concern.

> As a parent, I want my child to have as good an education as possible. As a working parent, I see spending and increasing taxes forcing me to move to an apartment and rent my house to someone, so I can afford the taxes to pay for a school in a town I can't afford to live in anymore. [The Bar Harbor Times: May 8, 1997:A7]

Of course, summer people pay tax on properties even though they do not send their children to the schools, and many have supported endowment funds for scholarships, faculty sabbaticals, and other special needs in the schools.

Tensions Between the Towns:

There is tension between the communities over the funding of the high school. In 1967, when the high schools in the four towns consolidated into the Mount Desert Regional High school, the state legislature passed a law allowing the island communities to use a formula based on population and property evaluation in determining a levy for each town. Mount Desert, the most affluent town on the island and the 19th richest municipality in the State (in valuation of real property), was given an extra seat on the high school board as compensation for assuming a larger share of expenses, and the school was located on the outskirts of Bar Harbor, easily accessible to adjacent Northeast Harbor, Seal Harbor and Somesville (villages within the town of Mount Desert). The Town of Mount Desert now regrets this compromise, and Principal Perkins of the Tremont Consolidated Grammar School states that since tension between the towns is high, due to the stalemate over school funding, he fears that agreements on other issues of shared concern will be stymied (Perkins, Interview: November, 1995).

Long-standing differences in the extent to which the towns support schooling further increases tension between high school board members attempting to represent their distinctive constituencies. As we saw on Table Two, there is a difference between the percentage of the annual budget allocated by individual towns to schooling.[88] Historically, Tremont has spent a higher percentage of its budget on schooling than the other towns, and Bar Harbor has had the lowest per allocation per pupil. For example, at least since the late 1940s the town of Bar Harbor has had a reputation for under-funding its schools. Bar Harbor was the first town to support consolidation of the high schools in 1948 and the only town to support middle school consolidation in 1993. In the debates over high school and middle school consolidation, it is clear that people from other towns feared that Bar Harbor wanted to consolidate so it could take advantage of the greater financial commitment other towns make to schooling. In 1993-1994 Bar Harbor spent $3,589 per pupil, which was $880.00 less than the next lowest per capita allocation by a town

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[88] Though expenses for crime prevention and the fire department are lower than in the other towns, Tremont could decide to allocate its scarce resources to areas other than education.

(Table Two). In 1993, residents of other towns were concerned that consolidation of middle schools would result in lowered educational standards because Bar Harbor, with more votes, would control expenditures.

Contemporary Education in Maine:

In 1984 Maine undertook a serious reform of its schools that is beginning to produce results. The first step was legislation that "stiffened graduation requirements, launched a statewide standardized test, raised teacher salaries, and created a forgivable loan program to entice college students into teaching" (Education Week, 1/22/97:122). In 1990 Maine issued the "Common Core" of learning, which attempted to lay a foundation for what Maine students should know. Produced by volunteers in committee, this document seems choppy, poorly prioritized and disorganized; however, it was useful in initiating conversation about the importance of formal education to Maine. By 1994, state task forces had established criteria known as "learning results" for eight subjects and had determined that by 2002 Maine students must meet those standards to graduate from high school. Although the Legislature did not pass all the task force proposals, due in part to the opposition of Christian Rights groups who feared the erosion of local control, there has been voluntary compliance with the standards.

The Maine Educational Assessments have been critical to the success of education reform in Maine, and critical to the success of these tests is the leadership of Dr. Horace Maxcy, who has directed the Maine Educational Assessments for over twenty-five years. Due in large part to his vision and patient persistence, Maine is one of very few states to offer a test with no multiple choice questions. All responses to the MEA are open-ended, requiring students to think, and are graded by two trained teachers. Maxcy hopes that not only the content, but also the emphasis on process and thinking, will reflect increasingly the success of Maine students academically. In fact, one can see this progress already. "In 1994 -1995, 75 percent of Maine 4th graders scored at the basic level or above on the state assessment; 25 percent performed at the lowest, or novice, level. Last year, only 13 percent of the 4th graders tested at the novice level. Eighth grade students also showed gains last year when the proportion judged to be novices in math dropped to 29 percent from 44 percent in 1994-95 (Education Week, 1/22/97:122).

It is important to stress that the standard for these categories is absolute, not a relative standard based either on responses from year to year or on a bell-curve within any one year. Maxcy brought groups of educators together to define categories and found astounding agreement on expectations for the standards. The first year the test was administered, he and his staff expected only about ten to fifteen fourth graders in the population of 14,000 would reach the highest level of achievement; they hoped that in succeeding years having such a standard would serve to improve results. This policy, which makes it very difficult for schools to obfuscate results (as when standards are relative), is politically courageous and educationally sound; it seems to be producing the hoped for results.

However, formal education in Maine still suffers from low-funding and relatively poorly prepared teachers. "The percentage of Maine's teachers with a degree in their main field of teaching is below the national average," and only two other states in the nation pay teachers less when the average is adjusted for cost of living (Education Week, 1/22/97:122-123). However, this is offset by the fact that "67 percent of what the state spends on education goes directly into classroom instruction" (the national average is 61 percent) and "only Utah and New York do better" (Education Week, 1/22/97:123).

Funding of education in Maine is tied to the property tax, a complex issue in a state with increasing numbers of retirees and a long-standing reluctance to give up local control. In 1969 Maine adopted a personal and corporate income tax, and the legislature tried, in 1974, to "institute a uniform state property tax to equalize educational spending between richer and poorer communities" (Condon, 1995:568), but the referendum was voted down.

In 1995 Maine spent $5,623 per pupil, "slightly more than the national average of $5,541." Nevertheless, "when Maine's expenditures are examined as a percentage of its taxpayers' per capita personal income, the state ranks 8th in the nation." Furthermore, Maine "increased its inflation-adjusted spending per student by 43 percent...between 1984-85 and 1994-95, far ahead of the nation as a whole, which averaged 21 percent" (Education Week, 1/22/97:125). But the recession of the 1980s' forced the state to lower its support of localities from 53 percent to 50 percent of expenditures for education, a gap some towns could not bridge. The effects of this under-funding are seen most clearly in deferred investment in capital projects for facilities and equipment like computers.[89]

The success of Maine schools has something to do with efficiency in spending, but more to do with the structure of its schools and the nature of the population they serve. Maine is a predominantly rural state with a dispersed population. Even though consolidation dissolved schools in many small towns, "53 percent of Maine's elementary students are in schools enrolling 350 or fewer students, compared with 18 percent nationally, and 77 percent of its high school students are in schools of 900 or fewer students, compared with 32 percent nationally" (Education Week, 1-22-97:124). The pupil-teacher ratio of 14:1 is also a factor, as is the relative well-being of Maine's children.[90]

Maine's children come from families that are below the national median in income ($33,858 in contrast with $34,076), but fewer families are poor. The census reports that eleven percent of Maine families are below the poverty line, while the national average is fourteen. About nineteen percent of Maine children are poor, and twenty-four percent live with a single parent. Maine children are less likely to be born at a low birth weight, to die as infants, to give birth themselves, and to drop out of school than are children in the rest of the United States.

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[89] For example, Tremont needs to expand existing facilities and is high on the State's priority list, but the Legislature has not approved money even for projects with higher priority and it is unlikely Tremont will receive assistance in the near future (The Bar Harbor Times, May 8, 1997: A7).

[90] Though not the province of this study, I cannot resist suggesting that the efficiency of Maine's relatively dispersed school system seems a powerful argument against consolidation. Even though some educators and legislature still argue that consolidation saves money, recent studies, such as those by Craig Howley, show otherwise. See also Lawrence, 1993.

Thirty-six percent of the three to five year olds in the state were enrolled in public kindergartners and preschools in 1991, just above the national average (Education Week, 1-22-97:124-125).

The University of Maine System

In 1968 the Legislature created a new university system for Maine. But this system was founded on a restrictive budget and, more importantly, a narrow vision of the role of higher education in the state. Even at the beginning, Governor Longley "jousted with the chancellor and trustees of the University of Maine, with lasting effects on the university's budget" (Condon, 1995:570). Limited public support for the University of Maine may be linked to an attitude about education reported in a study conducted for the Commission on Maine's Future which found that "There is consensus for investment in education, but only insofar as it furthers career opportunities. Education in the sense of liberal arts and personal development does not have a broad base of support" (Commission, 1989:27).

There is an interesting contrast to be made between investment in schooling in Ireland, an island nation with a paucity of natural resources except scenery and people, and investment in formal education in Maine, a small state with similar resources. The government of Ireland decided its people were its greatest resource and invested heavily in schooling, a decision which has created a nation with a high level of education that now draws outside investment.[91] These businesses are primarily pharmaceutical, technological, and financial, requiring highly skilled workers, not the low-paying service jobs drawn to areas of unskilled, low-wage labor. In Ireland, "overseas companies are now obtaining the essential ingredient for this knowledge-intensive sector...namely highly skilled human resources" (Dept. Foreign Affairs, 1996:15). The Irish economy, one of the best performing economies in Europe in recent years," has enjoyed a GNP that between 1988 and 1995 grew at an annual rate of 5.1 percent" (Dept. of Foreign Affairs, 1996:17).

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[91] In 1995 there were 1,078 foreign companies in Ireland, four hundred alone from the United States (Dept. Foreign Affairs, 1996: 15).

Maine, however, has never wholeheartedly supported its public university system. One symptom of this reluctance to support higher education can be seen today in the rate at which Maine students attend public post secondary institutions within the state. Even though in 1996 Maine ranked sixth in the nation in the percentage of its youth graduating from high school, in the same study the state ranked forty-ninth in the rate at which its high school graduates went on to publicly supported post-secondary schooling within the state and forty-fourth in the rate at which they attend college anywhere. Maine is tenth in the rate at which graduating seniors go on to post-secondary schooling in private institutions or out-of state, leading the author of the study to point out that in Maine, "the absence of local public opportunities clearly appears to undermine overall college attendance" (Halstead, 1996:23, 25, 59).[92]

TABLE SIXTEEN
Data from the Report on Higher Education

In Relation to the Rest of the Nation, Maine is:

6th	in the percent of resident high school graduates per 18 year old population
30th	in the percent of all first-time freshmen from out-of-state
32nd	in median income of households
43rd	in the absolute size of the system of public enrollment (FTE)
44th	in the percent of recent high school graduates starting college anywhere (total entrance rate, fall, 1994)
48th	in the system relative size (FTE public students per 1,000 population)
49th	in the ratio of public FTE students to high school graduates
49th	in the relationship of public 2-year college resident tuition and median income of households

Halstead, 1996

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[92] Please note that this figure does not contradict the other information. It tells us that of those Maine seniors who do go on to post-secondary education, a large number select out-of-state

Tuition is a significant factor in the decision students and their families make about whether or not the student can continue his or education at The University of Maine, a private college in-state, college out of the state, or a vocational school. In 1994-95 the average cost of educating a full-time student in a public institution was $6,795; however, in Maine the cost was $9,211, the highest of all the states. Maine ranks thirty-third in the nation in the percentage of state tax potential allocated to funding its universities and fortieth in the percentage of appropriations made for public higher education from collected revenues. Maine has the twelfth highest tuition in the nation, and only four other states require a higher percentage of median family income for tuition (Halstead, 1996:49,53). Most indicting of all these numbers is, perhaps, the rank of worst in the nation in the ratio of funding to productivity, the combination of total funding (appropriations plus net tuition revenues per full-time student) divided by the number of students attracted to the system (Halstead, 1996:65).

Curiously, Maine does not operate within the New England pattern of low appropriations and high tuition; instead, it is one of five states nationwide with "both reasonably high appropriations and high tuition revenues" (Halstead, 1996:80). This suggests that, for whatever reasons (and they are beyond the purview of this study), in Maine the dollars spent on post-secondary schooling are not yielding the kind of results they do in the elementary and secondary schools and that the state is sending many of its brightest young people on a quest for education beyond its borders (or to private in-state colleges), much as it forced earlier generations to seek jobs outside of Maine. As we see in the writing of Gordon Donaldson, as well as interviews with Tremont students, some young people feel they must leave the state "to see the world" and find the challenges they seek.[93]

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colleges - a large enough number to rank the state tenth in the nation in this dubious category. I think this is another symptom of the lack of support Maine gives its institutions of higher learning.

[93] The Maine Department of Education reported "that 71 percent of the state's high school graduates who went to college attended schools in Maine in 1975, while 29 percent chose school outside the states. In 1994, 48 percent of graduating high school seniors stayed in Maine while 52 percent chose colleges or universities out of state" (Bangor Daily News, July 8-9, 1995:A-1).

Even the MEA-scholarship program, created in 1985 to retain Maine's finest students (those testing in the top one percent in reading, writing and mathematics on the MEA), has been unsuccessful. The "four-year, free-tuition scholarship to the campus of [their] choice in the state university system" has only managed to hold thirty of eighty-eight students offered the scholarship within Maine. "Last year, only one of the state's nine brightest kids stayed within the Maine system. Others were lured out of state to more prestigious colleges and/or because they 'want a change of scenery' " (Perry, 1996:12/18/98). Though the statement about a change of scenery may seem superficial, it is probably one of several elements in a student's decision about whether or not to pursue post- secondary schooling within the public state system.

Summary:

There has been a strong tradition of primary and secondary schooling in Maine and on Mount Desert Island since settlement. For many years, people on Mount Desert Island resisted consolidating island schools; however, in 1951 the ten elementary schools were reduced to four, one apiece in the largest village of each township. In 1967, after a long and rancorous battle, islanders agreed to consolidate the high schools into Mount Desert Regional High School, located on the outskirts of Bar Harbor and adjacent to the Town of Mount Desert, but more distant from Southwest Harbor and Tremont.

By retaining small-scale and traditional approaches to education, Maine has managed, through the efforts of exceptionally dedicated and talented people, to create and maintain very strong elementary schools, such as Tremont Grammar School. However, the record in post-secondary schooling is not so good. In both cases, the reasons behind the present condition have to do with the history or the state and the culture that developed in Maine.

SKETCHES OF SOUTHWEST HARBOR

Wharf Dance

I can hear the music before I see where it is coming from. It floats over the water from Southwest Harbor to the elegant cottages of Northeast that line the shore like ancient ladies with lorgnettes and cascading pearls that hold up their necks. I drive from dinner with the chatelaine of such a cottage around the harbor filled with Hinckley yachts and wonder how many nations of the world have a lower GNP than the value of these boats so splendidly assembled. Driving up Sargent's Drive along Somes Sound, I leave this world, watching phosphorus catch the moonglow, hearing the tinkle of glasses and the slap of halyards against wooden masts, until I travel around the island to Southwest Harbor, to the dance at the marina wharf. Now the music is loud and thumps against me.

There are people of all ages at this dance: people in jeans and faded jackets standing in groups drinking sodas and munching potato chips, toddlers sleeping in their mother's arms, children dancing well and wildly, adolescents back against the fence of lights surveying the scene, older married couples, gay and lesbian couples, dancers with rhythm, dancers without, dancers who have glided together for years, dancers who just bumped into each other and perform an impromptu celebration. The wharf is full of people, highlighted by the stars and the lights of Northeast Harbor shining together.

Like Sand Hill cranes the dancers work their necks up and down in an elaborate ritual that spans seasons, sexuality, and culture. I would not be at this dance, my first as a single woman in twenty-seven years, if my friend Brook, a widow too young for her life, had not brought me and her friend Jim. Somehow she has found courage to keep looking for life. The music catches us by the arm and drags us into the circle. Everyone dances, so I do not feel odd dancing without a partner. Brook leads us in single file, Jim following and drawing me along. How kind this is of them.

When I look at the crowd, I begin to distinguish friends. I see Richard and Jane, newly married, whirling and whirling, writing a symphony in their touching and turning, forgetting for a moment his child whom they left in the hospital, hoping for the miracle of donor marrow to work its strength in his blood. I watch Brook and Jim as they twist against the music and each other, she always a little ahead of him. One young man, an extraordinary, original dancer, is a joy to watch as he invents steps and reacts to the beat of the music.

Then a bizarre dervish spins past: a clown of a man with curly bushes of Clarabelle hair, a shirt the colors of a beach ball, hot pink shorts, sky blue socks, and big shoes. He hops, bends, turns, his smiles slipping off his face, forever spinning his way through the dancers. Brook says, "Isn't that Stephen?" "No," I answer, "Stephen wouldn't look like that." But I haven't seen Stephen since his divorce from Susannah and I don't really know what he looks like. Suddenly he is next to me and I see the shadow of Stephen in his face, Stephen who was shy and bright, withdrawn and competent, now a cartoon, a caricature of himself.

So we all dance, turning misery out of our minds. In the final dance I feel wild and dance well - with rhythm and invention, flying lightly over the wharf, turning and twisting, a woman reborn. We are joined by a young man who cannot see in the half light that I am twice his age. He likes the way I dance and I like it too. And so for a while we act and react to each other in a dance of second chances.

Rosie's House

I moved to Maine in 1979, retreating to my childhood cave, my summer refuge. Summer in Maine: eating thick hamburgers and burnt marshmallows on the rocks, lying on pink granite slabs molded by glacier and tide. Who will last longest? Warmed by sun and rock, we await the icy tide returning, trickling under arms and legs, then flowing in cold embrace. Summer - time we were together. "Can we do something, the whole family together?" asks my little brother. It is special to have step-father, mother, step-sister, half-sister, half-brother, Irish Nanny, and my beagle Gwendolyn, all together, all in the same large house by the sea.

Lost childhood or childhood never found? Does it really matter? The illusions that brought me back to this are powerful. I brought my family home to Maine: one husband, one wife, two children (a brother and sister), and two Maine coon cats, the only ones who could claim to be returning home.

I bought the big house on the ocean with money from my dead mother. We chose the house for the site - land bordered by an extraordinary seawall of pink popplestones ground by eons of waves, soft shapes that belie their strength. I can hear the click, click, clicking as waves jostle the rocks, a dancer with a million castanets. I see Gott's Island and Little Cranberry, and, over the Western Way, passage to the inner harbors. The pictures will change with the seasons and weather to include schooners like the three-masted Victory Chimes or the Mary Day, her red-orange sails burning like sunset against the water. I see Coast Guard cutters with the crimson sashes of ushers at debutante parties, lobster boats with men in yellow So'westers, and yachts festooned with flags flying. Once I saw three houses moving across my horizon. Binoculars revealed it really was three houses. Later I learned a summer acquaintance had bought antique Capes to string together as a shorefront perch on Somes Sound.

The children arrive for the 4th grade class party. Did I volunteer our house? Did the teacher ask? I don't know. I just remember the little boy with eyes so wide the white encircled the irises like fried eggs. "Is this a mansion?" he asked. "Yes, this is a mansion," he answers himself, proud to have been to one.

"Oh no," I thought, "I know mansions and this isn't one of them."

Another day my son asked if I knew where Rosie, one of his classmates, lived. He had complained before that Rosie sometimes smelled and always wore the same acid aqua dress with yellowing ruffles. I asked if he knew where Rosie lived, as I did not. And he said yes, he had just learned that she lived with her father, her mother, her sister, and her brother in their rusting station wagon in a parking lot in town.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The People and Their School

The picture one sees through the eyes of people who have grown up in Tremont and gone to the school (or whose children or grandchildren have gone to the school), is of a school characterized by small size and close relationships among teachers, students, their families, and members of the community, a school in which trust has flourished and there are expectations of behavior and performance that apply to everyone. It is a school in which children are welcomed and equal, in which the environment is nurturing and supportive, and in which experience and continuity are appreciated. Though the physical setting is beautiful, the school itself is cramped and out-dated. Students have no science laboratory and only a very small library. Classrooms that once seemed spacious are now crowded by the children of a population burgeoning from in-migration and "natural increase."[94] Still, I come away wondering why the working model of a good school isn't a small school like Tremont instead of factory-like institutions that erode and constrict the spirits of those who must serve time in them.

Tremont Consolidated Grammar School

Tremont School, a combination of the four small elementary schools that once served the villages of Seal Cove, West Tremont, McKinley, and Bass Harbor, is a simple one-story brick and wood structure originally constructed for a smaller population, which has led to crowding and other problems. Enrollment in the K-8 elementary school jumped between 1970 and 1980 and has fluctuated since then (TCP, 1997:E.4). In school year 1995-96 there were 181 students and sixteen faculty and staff in a facility with nine classrooms and 11,000 square-feet of floor space (TCP, 1997: E-10).

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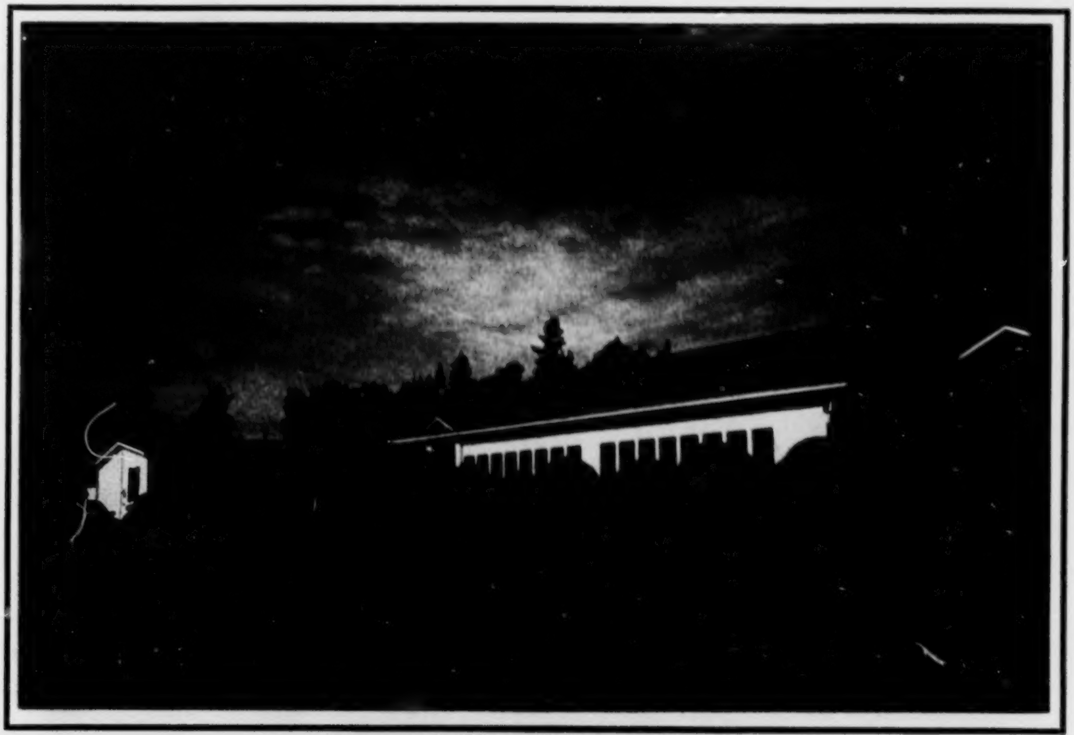
[94] The increase is also due, I suspect, to causes such as delayed child-bearing that have enlarged the population of school-age children across the country. To accommodate the larger number of children the school has to rent modular classrooms.



Tremont Consolidated School

The Playground, facing Bass Harbor Marsh

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Bass Harbor Marsh

Facilities are limited. The School Building Committee reports that "lack of space is the most serious problem facing the school and it is affecting the quality of programming. The school needs three additional classrooms of 1,000 square feet each...a 1,100 square foot library and 3,000 square feet of art, science and music classrooms" (TCP, 1997: E-12). There is only a small library, and the science teacher must teach without a lab[95]

Important Characteristics of the School:

The smallness of Tremont School permits associations on a human scale. People know each other and are known. Rather than melding into an anonymous mass, children and teachers can be available to each other; they can be encouraged and held accountable. In answer to the question: what contributes to the fact that students in the school out-perform expectations on the Maine Educational Assessment?, many parents, teachers, administrators and former students first replied, "small size."

A parent and school nurse says, "I believe part of it may be size. Tremont is smaller." A former student at Tremont, whose daughters also attended the school, says, "It was great, small classes." A long-time teacher states, "I wonder about school size, Tremont is small." Another former student who is now a parent herself, says the thing she liked most was that "it was small." Her cousin adds, "Yes, small, only ten in my class." And another former student who is now a nurse concurs: "Size made a big difference, one-on-one attention from teachers, [relationships] seemed a lot friendlier with the teachers and with the students." A college student, who with his family moved to Tremont after attending many other schools, including the Mount Desert Elementary School, states, "I would think the school system....Classes are so small and it is such a close kind of thing that I think it is much better than the large school."

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[95] A Building Committee was appointed to develop a plan to address these needs; however, its proposal, "expenditure of up to $1.894 million for the construction of new classrooms and the renovation of some of the existing space," was rejected by voters 253 to 241 on May 13, 1997. The School Board is working to develop another emergency plan to deal with crowding due to increased enrollment and lack of facilities such as a Science Laboratory (The Bar Harbor Times, May 8 and 15, 1997).

The impact of knowing and being known, of "belonging," dramatic on all students, is critically important for students from low SES families. Research such as Craig Howley's work in West Virginia (Howley, 1994) has shown that there is a correlation between success of these students and the size of the school they attend. Low SES students do not fare as well in larger schools where they may drift more easily to the fringe of activities. An experienced school administrator, who has worked in Maine schools for over thirty-five years and is a long-time resident of Tremont, shows us how this works:

> There is an impact when you are dealing with kids in the lower class. The kids from the small towns, not all of them but many of them, get buried. They don't make themselves fit into a larger school and they kind of get lost....There is an inferiority feeling that shows itself. That is one of the big things we have battled in the State of Maine for years with consolidated schools.

"Belonging," characterized by "a sense of connection, support, and community," is one of the eight preconditions identified by the NCSA as necessary for students to develop high levels of aspiration. The sense of belonging, created in part by small size of the school, is evident in the responses students in sixth through eighth grade give on the Aspirations Survey, though the seventh graders seem relatively disengaged.[96] (The report of These data is in the Appendix). The first element in the success of Tremont school is small size.

Working within the framework of a small school are teachers who know their students, the community, and each other. This does not mean they always agree, but it does seem to mean they work well together as colleagues. I did not find one student, parent, or member of the community who said anything negative about teachers at Tremont School, except that certain members of the faculty were particularly tough and demanding. Some students complained that while they were in the class they thought the teacher's expectations were too high, but they looked back with respect and affection for teachers who had helped them discover the kind of work they were capable of doing.

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[96] When I reviewed the data from the sixth through eighth grades, I was struck by how differently the seventh graders responded to most questions. When I was confident there was a pattern to these responses, I asked Principal Perkins to describe the seventh grade. He told me that many of the seventh graders come from single-parent families facing difficult issues. Setting aside any pedagogical or humanitarian reaction I may have to this knowledge, I think the marked difference in the replies made by the seventh graders tends to confirm the accuracy of the survey in eliciting honest responses from students and shows ways in which students carry family and social pressures into the classroom.

The success Tremont students have on the MEAs indicates that academic standards at Tremont School are high, even though students come from relatively low SES backgrounds (Table One). Students in the sixth to eighth grades, although not entirely in agreement, indicate that the school enables students to take risks, feel a sense of achievement, and experience curiosity and excitement in their academic work - four important preconditions for high aspirations. Knowing and being known, being part of a small fraternal community, being in a setting that permits people to do well, and being appreciated seem important to all. As the school administrator noted: "You would be amazed by how much the teachers [in Tremont] know about the kids and families."

Mrs. L., an energetic, chipper woman with a seemingly infallible memory, taught in Tremont for thirty-six years, first in a village school, then in the town's consolidated grammar school. She remembers stirring chowder made with government surplus corn for her students' lunch in the one room village school, and that she also stoked the coal stove while teaching math and reading. She appreciates the teachers with whom she taught for so long at the consolidated school:

> We were all there to work, none of us to get the big paycheck. It was the love of the job, and back in those days we did know all the people. Maybe I didn't know the little kid 'til he got in my room, but just as soon as I found out who his parents were then I knew them.. As I say, I stayed so long that I had my own students that I had had - I knew their children. I had my own sons, I had my grandchildren, except one, and I had nieces and nephews and I had cousins and...there was a girl in my first grade who once said, "Mrs. L., you know you are my 'far away' cousin," [because] her father had said we were distant cousins.

Knowing and being known is seen as an advantage by students as well.

> James: We had an advantage going in because we had a grandmother who was teaching there at the time.
>
> Trina: She taught Kindergarten.

> James: It wasn't like you were going off to a strange place, and had no one there, you automatically had a grandmother who was there and actually taught us our first year of school.
>
> B: Did you know any of the other teachers?
>
> Trina: I knew the first grade teacher, my cousin's grandmother, so we kind of had grandmothers back to back, Kindergarten and first, you get to know them quickly anyway, more so I think, I felt comfortable with all my teachers.

No one complained that this caused problems for them; in fact, former students seemed to value being known very highly.

> B: You know Tremont school well, what was it like?
>
> James: A lot of the teachers knew our parents, so that was different. Some of them actually went to school with our parents. I think it was easier to try to get to know the teacher that already knows your parents.
>
> B: Is there any way that could work against kids?
>
> James: I am sure it could, whether it did or not I am not sure. I never had any problem with any of the teachers.

Current students at the high school from Tremont agree. Together, a group of students responded "the size of the school" makes a difference, and one of them added that size is important because the teachers at Tremont

> know who you are, you have been there eight years, they know more about you. Here [at the high school] you are just another student. They [Tremont teachers] know how you work and what you need help in, how you learn, they know your personalities, they know what buttons to push to make you work. It is not that you are just another Joe Schmoe down the street who has a problem reading a book, it is like this kid who we all know might need a little help. There is a closer relationship between the teacher and the student.

As mentioned earlier, an extraordinary component of knowing and being known at Tremont School is that the Principal and so many of the teachers and staff are from the community and have taught at the school for many years. Seven teachers were born on Mount Desert Island, three of whom were raised in Tremont, two others in Maine. A long-time teacher states,

> There are five teachers here who have been here almost 25 years. Maybe this has nothing to do with it, but some of the kids we get, their parents have been through here, they know

> when they get to John, or Mike what the expectations are going to be. They tell their kids. When they get to the high school it is all changing.

A survey of the teachers shows the average length of their teaching at Tremont is 10.93 years, a comment on their dedication to the school. Their dedication shows the importance that teaching has in their lives, not only because it is considered a good job within the community, but because they are reasonably content with their school. It is interesting to compare the length of service of Tremont teachers with state and national data.

TABLE SEVENTEEN
Teachers' Average Length of Service

	Teachers	<3 years	3-9 years	10-20 years	20+ years
Tremont: 1996-97	16	0.0%	25.0%	31.2%	43.8%
Maine: 1993-94	14,558	5.6%	27.6%	38.0%	28.9%
U.S.: 1993-94		9.6%	26.4%	34.6%	29.5%

Data from Tremont teachers and The National Center for Education Statistics.

Clearly, Tremont teachers are very experienced.

The Principal also knows his community well. Mrs. M. adds, "I've known Val for a good many years; he was in school with my son. I have known him all his life; his mother and father taught there before he came....We have always had a good principal that is always right on to everything." The teachers are also highly regarded. Tim, a parent and former selectman notes, "The school has been very fortunate over the years in the fact that it has had had some very good people." His wife adds, "And they have kept them; they have stayed; they know the community."

And, in contrast to the prevailing stress on youth in American culture, this is a place where experience and commitment are valued, which may contribute to the long service of many of the teachers.

> Mrs. M.: I was the oldest one there and we would be sitting in the teachers' meeting and he would bring up something, and before they would vote...Val would say, "I want to know what [Mrs. M.] thinks about this." I said, "Val, you people are going to be here a long time after I'm gone, you people settle it and I will join in and I will take up and meet the requirement." But I always thought it was so nice of them. He didn't make me feel like I am an old lady - we will get rid of her.

Parents of present and former students agree that the dedication of the teachers is a very important part of the success of the school and that the fact that teachers know the students, their families, and the community helps the students feel cared about. John, the father of ten children, and his second wife, Shirley, know the school well through children, grand-children, and great-grandchildren. Shirley: "They had plenty of attention, they had good teachers." "Right," John agrees. A parent and school nurse says, "Teachers know literally everybody in school, all the children, all their families, and I think that perhaps each teacher gives that child extra, they don't have as many children per class."

Parents of three children who are or have been students at Tremont, but who themselves went to other grammar schools on the island, show how the closeness between students, teachers and families supports children.

> Wife: They are really available, they seem to show a little bit more concern, or see the kids as people instead of as students - and I don't know if that is just Tremont, but I mean the teachers at Tremont seem to care a lot about the students....Take Jane and Alice when they were in Mr. Y's class - a statement was made by Mr. Y. in front of the whole class, a very small class, ten or eleven, and all of them being girls but one or two, and a very close class, most of them being together since they were three years in nursery on up. Alice and Jane were very close and Jane was having a birthday party and Mr. Y. had made the statement that they were too close and they should think about having other friends as well. The statement was made and Jane and Al got very upset so they were crying - so the next morning they had two mothers right there at school. He took the time to apologize to the girls because he thought they misunderstood what he said. Val [the Principal] was upset, but they took the time to sit down and talk over a little thing like friendship, and finally the girls understood they had misunderstood. It is just little things like that. And this year Mary, my youngest, didn't want to go in for extra help because Mr. Sawyer "hated her." I said "You can't go for extra help if you don't ask." Well she wouldn't ask, so I asked him with her standing right here. "She says you hate her," just that way. She was shocked that I said that, and he said, "I don't hate her," and went over put his arm around her, "I don't hate her," and tried to make her feel more comfortable and she has been in this year lots of times for help and she is fine.
>
> Husband: Teacher didn't hate her to start with.
>
> Wife: 'Course not, but these kids get these things in their mind.
>
> Husband: But he is a tough teacher.
>
> Wife: A very tough teacher.
>
> Husband: But a good teacher.

> Wife: Absolutely.

The teachers care about children - it is part of their image of what it means to be a good teacher. The Principal adds, "I can see for most of the teachers that each and every one of us at the school feels that it is our responsibility to help students who are struggling. I think the kids are often the topic of conversation formally and informally here in the school. I know how students are doing."

Students currently at the high school agree.

> "In Tremont you had to put forth an effort to fail you had to deliberately."
>
> "If you weren't doing something right, you could get extra help."
>
> "At Tremont, if you didn't do your homework you would get detention and you would do it then."
>
> "Teachers willing to stay every night after school."
>
> "At Tremont, since it is such a small school, the teacher can focus on students one at a time."

Parents contrast teachers in other schools, whom they see as more interested in academically successful students, with teachers at Tremont, who seem to encourage all students. A parent who was a student at another school on the island makes a comparison: "Teachers [in the other island schools] tend to help the ones who have the higher grades, and they tend to forget about us, the ones who might have needed a little bit of help, whereas with my kids they have a lot more help at Tremont, a lot more aides, and I felt any student that needed a little extra help the teachers are always there for."

Tremont residents believe that teachers at Tremont School care about their students and that this affects students and their parents.

> Wife: The girls [my daughters] have had a couple of situations where the Department of Human Services have stepped in on a couple of the kids here and I was telling one of the mothers...it doesn't just affect the kid that is being taken away from the parents, it affects the whole class....I think when I was in grammar school it really wouldn't have bothered the group as a whole, whereas over here it doesn't just affect one student, it affects the whole class. I think they downright care, they really care.

> B: And where do you think that comes from?
>
> Wife: I don't know, I really don't know if it comes from parents, I don't think so, I think....
>
> Husband: Some of it's got to rub off from the teachers and staff, the teachers....It goes right down through there - you are the boss - your guys - you do this stuff backwards, if you do it that way, the crew is going to do it that way. It is the same with school, school isn't any different, it is just the next step up.

That the teachers care about their students is also seen in their continuing interest in their students. A mother of two daughters, who herself went to school in Tremont, said:

> All the teachers at Tremont cared about where the kids are going to school, they ask about her all the time, at least four teachers have kept up with her college choice, her acceptance, her career. Val Perkins, Jim Sawyer, [two] others, always whenever I saw them wanted to know, like they had an interest.

I have experienced the same thing. Whenever I meet one of my daughter's former teachers from Tremont, he or she always asks how Elizabeth is doing and where she is, which confirms my feeling that they really are interested. Knowing, being known, and belonging to a community - feeling as if you matter - is a critical part of the success of Tremont students; it is the quality of teaching at Tremont School that helps make this success possible.

The uniformly positive responses of sixth, seventh and eighth graders to questions on the Aspirations Survey about mentoring indicate that Tremont School is meeting this precondition for high aspirations identified by the NCSA. Students stated strongly that teachers care about them, expect them to succeed, and care about their problems. Even the relatively alienated seventh graders agreed with these statements.

Tremont School offers a nurturing environment, noticeably more so than at other schools even on the island. Caring and acceptance are highly valued at Tremont and help students feel comfortable taking risks. Many parents of students who had attended other schools, including myself, tell stories of ways in which their children were accepted at Tremont after their children had been teased or harassed at another school.

> B: Is it any different because there are a lot of new people - do they make the school different?

> Wife: I do not think the kids are affected by it, they have some new students and they accept them openly. When I was in grammar school, you are run through a test, you have to make it. But they pretty much accept kids openly. I don't think they have that kind of peer pressure like when I was in school.
>
> B: What do you think?
>
> Husband: I would agree with that.
>
> B: I think Tremont is very unusual in that, that is what endeared Tremont School and the town to me - the way they accepted my daughter at the school - it didn't matter where she was coming from.

An experienced school administrator who has served in many schools in Maine, shows us how important acceptance and nurturing can be.

> The bottom ones tend to go back and drop back, they don't have the ability or the confidence which is provided here, or the wider support systems of the small school. The atmosphere of this school is excellent and a great deal of it comes from the fact that over the years, the school, teachers who have stayed quite a while - and know the kids and their families - encourage them, get them going, get them to be part of the groups and get them feeling they can succeed.

And the mother of a child who was teased in another school shows what a difference the atmosphere at Tremont made for her daughter.

> When we moved to Tremont from Southwest [she was] in sixth to seventh grade, and she always had a weight problem all her life - she probably always will - and she hadn't been here more than a week and some kid was poking fun at her weight, and Mr. Y. took that kid and said, "I don't want you ever to say anything about someone's weight, not in front of me," and she never had a problem again.

Perhaps it is part of the culture of traditional Maine exemplified in Tremont, as we saw in Chapter Five, that people accept difference and eccentricity, but there is a contrast between the ethos of Tremont Grammar School and the school in the adjacent town of Southwest Harbor.[97]

I think the success of Tremont School is grounded in the nurturing atmosphere at the school, an atmosphere in which teachers, administrators and children seem to care about and accept one another. The nurturing environment, as stated above, allows children to feel confident and helps them dare to stretch themselves, which is what the NCSA identifies as risk-taking and what other researchers see as a necessary component for expanding the self and feelings of self-efficacy. Although there is a difference in the way girls respond to questions about self-confidence, 82.4 percent of students in Tremont School in grades six through eight express confidence in their ability to do well.

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[97] From 1979 to 1982 I had two children in the Southwest Harbor school and taught anthropology classes there under a grant, which gave me opportunity to know the school at that time.

Although expectations of, and opportunities for, children seem to be evenly distributed in Tremont School, there are choices teachers must make that affect a child's future. A young man currently in college describes such a watershed:

> B: So were teachers at Tremont encouraging everyone equally?
>
> Seth: No, not equally. There was always that difference between - like I had Mr. Sawyer, that wasn't the whole class for Algebra, it wasn't the whole class; it was segregated to the people who were supposed to be good at math. I would say that they weren't expected to get into college - you've got to get into math, at least pre-calculus, and obviously if you start behind it is kind of hard to catch up. So eighth grade almost predetermined what was expected of the kids and what they then began to expect of themselves.

There is a screening process, based on ability and interest in core subjects like math, that selects students at a young age who will find it easier to complete requirements for entrance to college - but perhaps this is inevitable.

Tremont Consolidated Grammar School has become the focus of the community. Members of the community show support by attending events at the school, by contributing financially (both in taxes and donations to the Tremont School Fund),[98] and by volunteering for the very active Tremont Parent-Teacher Organization. Here, the principal describes the relationship between the school and the community:

> I think it is a combination of things. As long as this school is seen as a community school, so it is seen by the [students]...and their families and the community at large as a school that is important to their lives from five years old until the age of fourteen - a nine year span of time, which [is] compared to a four year program. So it is a nine year inclusive program that starts at that early age....That [support] will be evidenced by the number of people who will be here this evening for a Kindergarten through grade five Christmas program. So this,

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[98] Started in 1985 by a small group of parents, the Tremont School Fund has raised approximately $95,000 and disbursed $30,000 in small grants to teachers at Tremont School to be used for programs and special equipment that benefit the students. Although it is impossible to determine the portion donated by the year-round community and that given by the summer community, year-round residents are actively involved in fund-raising through locally sponsored events such as "Hoopla!," an annual basketball marathon.

> the town of Tremont, sees its school as theirs and the children, I think, see the school as theirs.

Parents and grandparents agree. A Postmistress of one of the town's little communities, who has served for thirty-five years, says:

> I think the school down here has a lot to offer the kids, really good. I don't know how to explain that, but they seem to be all for the kids. I think that's why they do so well, I think probably they feel the parents are always there. Anything going on at the school seems the parents are always there - that was a big help to them.

Others, such as Mr. and Mrs. M., echo her thoughts.

> Mrs. M.: I think the general run of parents are most interested in their children and I think they show that by activities the school puts on. The place would be filled....If you put on a concert, there was standing room only; if it was a Christmas concert, anything the children were doing the parents seem most interested, and I think that has a lot to do with it.
>
> B: Does that tie in with what you think too?
>
> Mr. M: Yes, the support is a major thing that gets this school system together.

And former students concur:

> B: What was important about growing up in Tremont?
>
> Rebecca: So community based, like everyone was involved sort of - either their kids in sports or they were....it was just small, I couldn't get away with anything because everyone knew who you were - just such a small area.
>
> B: Do you miss the closeness of Tremont now?
>
> Rebecca: I do sometimes, I knew a lot of people there and here I know hardly anyone.
>
> B: Do you go home a lot?
>
> Rebecca: I did, at first...I was home a lot, almost every weekend.

Integration with the community, a feeling that the school belongs to the community and reflects its goals and concerns, then, is another essential component in the success of Tremont School.

Another element in the success of Tremont School is the very active involvement of parents and other kin in the lives of children in Tremont. Each time I interviewed older residents, members of their families (great-grandchildren, grandchildren, and children) dropped by just to say hello, which seemed to be a regular occurrence as they were unaware I was going to be there. In addition to the informal support extended families give children in Tremont, there is an impressive formal program of family involvement at the school. The principal estimates that fifteen volunteers give an hour or two of time and expertise each week, a critical supplement to the work of paid teachers and staff. The school administrator comments:

> In this school they have one of the better programs in terms of parental involvement. I am one of the elderly ones now - I got interviewed by Mrs. D's class. There is an involvement with the community, parents particularly, kids do absorb the fact that parents feel the school is important and parents are involved in the classes.

Teachers know that there are many people in the community who are a resource to them - people on whom they can count for help in special projects and sometimes for significant contributions of time and energy. This is a tremendous boost to the morale of the children, teachers and staff, as well as a valuable supplement to the curriculum and limited financial resources of the school.

The support children feel from their parents and other members of their extended families is essential for their success in school. A group of cousins discusses what the support of their families meant to them.

> B: And you have a lot of family here?
>
> Trina: Yes, when I was growing up I had three great grandmothers at one time, four grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins....
>
> Todd: Oh yes, my whole family is from this area.
>
> B: So when we talk about support are we talking about your grandparents, great grandparents when they were alive, and aunts, uncles?
>
> All: Yeah.
>
> B: And cousins?
>
> Albert: I got a lot of support from my cousins. She stuck up for me [motioning towards his cousin]. I was getting picked on the first week I was [at the high school], she told them to lay off, she wouldn't have it.
>
> Trina: I think that helps too, I was there just before brother came up too. I don't know that I necessarily did anything, I do remember that story. You do though, you do stick up for your own kin.

Family support, seen through participation in school events and the active volunteer program is a significant component of the success of students at Tremont School, and for some, continues while they are students at the high school.

Results of the Aspirations Survey confirm that students in Tremont spend significant time with their families. 44 percent of students in third through fifth grades often spend time with family members; 53.6 percent occasionally do; and older students also spend considerable time with family members. The gender division is interesting, with more boys of all ages saying they spend a lot of time with family members.[99]

Students identify with the school. For many, regardless of their experience at the high school, the grammar school remains "their school." Obviously this is less true for students alienated from "school" in general, but the continuing attachment of students to the grammar school is striking. The Principal reports:

> A lot of the kids do not lose that 'connectedness' to this school for years beyond. They will still refer to Tremont school as their school if you were to ever ask them. as opposed to - I don't want to say opposed to the high school, as they are graduates - but yet they still see themselves as a member of Tremont School, that they went to Tremont School and they were able to participate in the programs here at the school.

When I asked teachers if there were students who drop by the school, there was a small chorus of "Oh yes," and several teachers said they talk with former students on a regular basis. One teacher said, "We have one kid [who graduated last year] who comes every day - she still has perfect attendance! Identification with the school, another way of establishing "belonging" for students, is an essential ingredient in the success of the school.

Another element that contributes to the success of Tremont School seems to be almost taken for granted by teachers, students and families. They talk about it only when asked to contrast the atmosphere at Tremont School with that at other schools, including the high school. Teachers, students, parents, and members of the community all mentioned the respectful, disciplined atmosphere at Tremont School, noting that it was conducive to good work habits, self-discipline and expectations for further education. Older residents point to the model of their parents with pride.

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[99] I am particularly interested by the number of older boys who claim to spend over eleven hours a week involved in family activities and wonder if this includes working with their fathers and other male members of the family in family owned businesses.

> We had to work, in the larger families they had to work. My father was nine years old when he started working in the sardine factory. They had different jobs - picking over fish, helping pack fish. We used to go down to the neighboring beach to get clams....I dug my first bushel of clams, dragged them around the shore for 25 cents. "Boy that is too hard work, that is enough for me," I said. We used to go down there, and snip the clams, snip the heads, go down, [it is] hard when you go to work, get pay, take it home to mother and sixteen kids.

A former teacher, Mrs. M., says:

> Mrs. M: The children in those days, I must say, the children were very well behaved. I will say that of course in any classroom you had a problem in there, but the children, they wanted to learn....I say, there were a few little scamps in every classroom, but they were much more respectful at that time. If you said "sit down and no talking," they sat down and no talking and didn't wear their hats backside to in school. (Laughs.) That is one thing they didn't do, that I don't like. That shows that I am old-fashioned.

A college student states:

> Yeah, yeah when you are in Tremont everyone does the work because the teachers expect it of you, like you do it, it is a very obedient corps. My class was fairly bad in school and they just went wild when they went to high school. When you are in Tremont, it is like a respect for the teacher kind of thing, so everyone picks up on that, you just become that way.

This observation is confirmed by the quantitative data in which students from Tremont Grammar school respond that they spent a considerable amount of time doing homework (see Appendix).

Discipline, good work habits, and respect help many students succeed, at least initially, at the high school. Mrs. M. notes:

> The guidance counselor told her [Mrs. M's relative, a young teacher] that the kids from Tremont, they have learned how to study, and get somewhere, and she was so pleased that he had said that. She was an honor student anyway, and he said the kids are ready when they come over here, so I thought that was a feather in her cap.

The school administrator adds: "Val's greatest strength is the fact that he operates a school of this size of very well behaved kids - you are going to have a job if you go into these classrooms to find a problem. He operates on the theory you are always going to do what is right."

However, some interviewees expressed concern about changing values in the local culture concerning the work ethic in academics and extra-curricular activities.

> Albert: I played at that father-son [basketball] game last year and the kids they are all goofing off and joking; and I mean not that it is bad to have fun, but when we played we played serious, it was important as a kid to do well.
>
> James: I remember that.
>
> B: And you are thinking now it is not important to do well?
>
> Albert: I don't think it is.
>
> Trina: There is no work ethic.
>
> James: There is not necessarily striving to be the best - they strive to stay even.
>
> Trina: I don't think they think about the future.
>
> Albert: That is right.
>
> James: I don't think they think enough about it....We also for the most part...we had jobs through the summer so that got us on the track sort of earning our money and we tithed to the church so it gave us some money to go here and go there and we saved some, and that got us a little bit looking to the future so it wouldn't be a shock, and whereas kids don't work through the summer and play, then there is playing and playing and you've wasted away eight years - not eight years, but from junior high or from fourth grade on you should be able to do something, not real big but productive.

In addition to the ethos that values respect, good behavior, and self-discipline, there has been a long tradition of competition with students from the other towns on the island. A great grandfather whose wife taught at the school for many years, and who is a long-time student of local history, shares his thoughts about why Tremont children do so well in school.

> They prided themselves even when Lovejoy was there before Val, they prided themselves in staying up with or ahead of the other schools. [My wife] taught here 35 years. When [the former Principal] was here, the children would try to compete [with children from the other island towns]; it was almost instilled in them that their grades should be up with all the others.

The teachers, staff, and administration at the school have created an ethos that values hard work, high expectations, and discipline, one that sees students as capable of competing with children from more affluent and "privileged" backgrounds. But, as we will see in the next chapter, older residents, and even recent graduates, are concerned that the work ethic in the high school is weaker now. This may simply be a generational difference of opinion, or the inevitable selectivity that distorts memories, but it is remarkable that this view pervades the observations of people who are recent graduates as well as those who are much older.

Another important component of the success children have at Tremont School is the opportunity to participate in extra-curricular activities, including athletics, drama, and music. Teachers make a real effort to include children in these activities, and many times over the years they and the Principal have told me how important they think it is to draw reluctant students into these activities. They have found that when children are involved in extra-curricular activities they tend to do better in academic work and to feel more positive about themselves and the school. Their experience confirms the concept of "manning." In a small school everyone is needed to "man" activities such as a newspaper, teams, musical productions, and plays. Students who might drift to the fringe in a larger school are pulled into participation in wholesome activities, which gives them the chance to "master" skills and discover potential that might have lain dormant in a larger school.

The rate of participation in sports or hobbies is strikingly high for boys and girls in third through fifth grades at Tremont School, with very few children (1.8 percent) reporting they never participate in these activities. The rate of participation for older children in grades six through eight is also high, with only 4 percent of boys and 14.7 percent of girls claiming they did not participate at all. There is a difference in the rates at which boys and girls participate, with boys putting considerably more time into sports and hobbies than girls (See Appendix).

However, older people, including those who graduated recently, are concerned that current students are relatively passive in the activities they choose.

> Albert: The kids today, the kids in the grade school level sports, you don't have the dedication that we did as kids. In the summer time we'd go play basketball nights after school, we would go down to his grandparents all the time and play - they don't do that any more.
>
> B: What are they doing now?
>
> Albert: They are playing video games, watching satellites [satellite TV]. They aren't getting out and doing things. We never watched TV, we did...
>
> James: When it got too dark to play...
>
> Albert: We would go walk the beach, we would go do this or that.
>
> Trina: I think his age, because you watched Nintendo...
>
> Todd: No, but it isn't like I stayed home all day and....
>
> Trina: It isn't? [All laugh].

Perhaps it is the nature of older people to look with skepticism at those who are younger; however, the responses to the Aspirations Survey do suggest children in Tremont spend a lot of time watching television and music or movie videos. In contrast to time spent watching television and videos, only 23 percent of students in grades six through eight at Tremont School report spending three to four hours per week reading for pleasure.

The Aspirations Survey addresses the issue of "empowerment," which "refers to students' ability to take control and gain mastery of their actions." Empowerment indicates an "innate desire for self-determination" and the ability to make "real choices." This critical component of the foundations for aspirations "can only be achieved in an environment that promotes mutual trust and the acceptance of individual responsibilities" (see Appendix). As we might expect, given responses to previous questions, most students in the sixth and eighth grades (89.5 percent and 81 percent) state that they are allowed to express their opinions.[100]

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[100] However, 39.3 percent of seventh graders do not believe this is true and conversely, only 25 percent of them believe that their teachers allow them to make choices about what they learn,

In the critical area of empowerment, responses are weaker than they are to questions about the other seven preconditions suggested by NCSA. Given the strengths of Tremont School in meeting these preconditions, it is surprising that in this one area students do not repond with more confidence. Or is it? Perhaps the relatively weak responses students give to questions about empowerment are linked to "fatalism," a cultural trait discussed in Chapter Five. Students' answers demonstrate their hesitation about taking control, making choices, and determining their own destinies. Students living in a culture that is fatalistic will have a hard time thinking about their future, no matter how confident they are within the confines of the school and their community.

It surprises people from the other island towns to learn that students in Tremont do so well on the MEA and that the school is so successful. The prejudice many express about the school, and about Tremont itself, reflects an attitude about people on the "backside." A nurse tells us: The doctor I work for took his child out of the school, they were moving to Somesville, but he wanted her to have another school system because he thought she would get a better education - the opposite has been true." And her husband adds: "We have a friend in Bar Harbor who was a teacher and...he said it is the best school. When a teacher in our district says it is the best school, that is pretty good." A former high school principal and long-time resident of Tremont states, "I think it certainly is [the best school]. I've said it is the best school....I have said it is the best school on the island." To which a school administrator and lifelong resident of Tremont adds an emphatic "Yes!" Perhaps most telling is the opinion of the guidance counselors at the high school, who state, as mentioned earlier, that the students from Tremont are, overall, the best prepared and hardest working of students at the high school.

But the success of Tremont School, a source of pride to residents of Tremont, is still a bit of a secret to people in the other towns, who may see only that the kids from Tremont wear gray uniforms with black lettering because that was the cheapest color combination available, or that

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while 36.8 percent of sixth graders and 89.5 percent of eighth graders state their teachers give them choices.

the gym in which they practice and hold their games is only half size because the budget could not encompass a full-size gym.

Tremont School does not offer the equipment, or even the courses, that students at the other island schools enjoy. The mother of three students from Tremont says:

> They do they best that they can do at Tremont, but they don't have a science lab, and the other three schools have a science lab...computer is the same. Tremont is coming along doing well with computers, but back when the other schools had computer labs, Tremont had one little computer. So in basic education nothing can beat Tremont, nothing, you can put them up against any school on this island - Northeast with all their money. Basic education these kids get the best, the very best, the best they can get. Jimmy Sawyer does a wonderful science class, but he has no science lab.

And her daughter tells us:

> I had never used a Bunsen burner until I got to high school. I didn't even knew what it was. "Turn your Bunsen burner on." I said, "Tell me what it is." We had one in the back of the classroom; since there were thirteen of us we never got to use it.
>
> Mother: We don't have what these other schools have, but Mrs. W. does so well with what she has - our sports program you play ball, they got good coaches.

Tremont School is able to offer its students very good schooling even though its facilities are inadequate. Instead of a well-stocked library, a science laboratory, and computers, the school gives children a nurturing environment in which they are expected to work hard to achieve high standards in academics, extra-curricular activities, and self-discipline. This is possible because the teachers are very experienced and know the community well, the parents and community members support the school in many ways, the school is small, and the cultural norms support working hard in elementary school and respecting adults.

The community of Tremont is the most traditional, the poorest, and the most isolated on Mount Desert Island. Yet students who attend Tremont Consolidated Grammar School do very well on the Maine Educational Assessment tests and are well prepared for high school. However, these same students do not go on to college in the numbers one would expect given their success in elementary school. We will look next at their transition to the high school to understand better some of the pressures that keep them from continuing their schooling.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Transition to the High School

For many students, particularly those from supportive families who are involved in extra-curricular activities and who know they are going on to college, Mount Desert Island Regional High School offers a great deal. For example, a college student states, "For people like me who are ready, who know they are going to college, know what they have to do, the high school works very well, at least it did for me. I had some great teachers. Like Dr. D., she was amazing."

However, transition to the consolidated high school is difficult for some students from Tremont. As they move from a class that is very small, often between eight and twelve students, to a class of well over one hundred, they confront problems that are in many ways neither nor surprising or extraordinary. For students accustomed to the nurturing of Tremont School, dealing with these problems can become very difficult.

A finding that surprised, even shocked me, and one I think must be followed up, is that a disproportionate number of teenagers from Tremont suffer from depression in the high school. An experienced nurse tells us:

> I work in the medical office and I see a lot of teenagers and my observation has been over the past years that the beginning of every school year we get "X" amount of teenagers, freshman usually, in the school who are really overwhelmed and a lot of them are from either Southwest Harbor or Tremont that are going to the high school. Some of them have been very good students and by Thanksgiving of that year they are overwhelmed. A lot of them are severely depressed kids, they might have been whether they are in high school or not.

She wisely notes that these students might have suffered from bouts with depression whether or not they were in the high school, but it is, I think, of great concern that students from Tremont are disproportionately represented in this group. Let us look at some of the elements that make transition difficult for students from Tremont.

Quantitative Data

Comparing the responses of eighth grade students who attend Tremont Grammar School and ninth graders from Tremont who attend Mount Desert Island High School shows ways in which these students feel differently about their lives and schools. The sample is small; however, it does include most of the possible population. Not all the responses are consistent, and certainly the angst of adolescence may be blamed for some of the alienation ninth graders feel. However, we are comparing a population that is similar in many respects: students from Tremont who are only six to twelve months apart in age, and for whom the significant variable is which school they attend.

There are significant differences in the ways in which eighth and ninth graders respond to questions on the National Center for Student Aspirations survey. Students in the eighth grade at Tremont School show more commitment to achievement, greater enjoyment of their daily lives, and a higher level of inspiration and ambition than students who graduated from Tremont Grammar School only a year before and attend the Mount Desert Island Regional High school.[101]

TABLE EIGHTEEN (a)
Data from the Aspirations Survey: Part One
Comparison of 8th and 9th Grade Students from Tremont

	Number	0	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	11+
Homework		**Hours**	**Hours**	**Hours**	**Hours**	**Hours**	**Hours**	**Hours**
8th Grade	21	14.3	9.5	42.9	14.3	9.5	4.8	4.8
9th Grade	13	15.4	23.1	15.4	30.8	7.7	0	7.7
Hanging Out								
8th Grade		0	33.3	23.8	23.8	9.5	0	9.5
9th Grade		0	42.9	42.9	14.3	0	0	0
Sport/Hobby								
8th Grade		9.5	19	33.3	9.5	9.5	9.5	9.5
9th Grade		7.7	15.4	23.1	30.8	0	7.7	15.4
Reading								
8th Grade		14.3	19	42.9	19	0	0	4.8

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[101] Survey results are reported in the Appendix.

9th Grade		7.7	46.2	23.1	15.4	0	7.7	0
TV/Videos								
8th Grade		5	10	30	20	15	10	20
9th Grade		0	15.4	15.4	7.7	23.1	15.4	23.1
Working								
8th Grade		25	30	30	10	5	0	0
9th Grade		46.2	15.4	7.7	15.4	0	7.7	7.7
Family Time								
8th Grade		4.8	23.8	9.5	23.8	14.3	4.8	19
9th Grade		7.7	15.4	53.8	15.4	0	0	7.7

TABLE EIGHTEEN (b)
Results of Aspirations Survey, Part Two
Comparison of 8th and 9th Grade Students from Tremont

ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION		
Percent of students who agree or strongly disagree.	**8th Grade**	**9th Grade**
I like to be very good at what I do.	94.7	100
I feel I can do just about anything I want to if I put my mind to it.	94.4	92.3
I never make plans or set goals for myself.	11.8	23.1
Getting good grades is not important to me.	15.8	38.5
I can be very disciplined and push myself.	94.7	75
ENJOYMENT of LIFE		
Percent of students who agree or strongly disagree.	**8th Grade**	**9th Grade**
I usually feel tired and bored.	22.2	69.2
I often have trouble getting motivated to do things.	31.6	53.8
I don't seem to succeed no matter what I do.	11.1	30.8
I am not interested in very many things.	5.3	23.1
I am often in a good mood.	94.7	69.2
INSPIRATION		
Percent of students who agree or strongly disagree.	**8th Grade**	**9th Grade**
Most of the things I do in school I find enjoyable.	81	61.5
School causes a great deal of stress for me.	42.9	84.6
When I'm at school, time seems to fly by.	66.7	69.2
School is important to my life on a regular basis.	95.2	69.2
I find it hard to concentrate in classes.	23.8	61.5
I find excitement in almost every class I attend.	42.9	46.2
AMBITIONS		
Percent of students who agree or strongly disagree.	**8th Grade**	**9th Grade**
What I learn in school will benefit my future.	90.5	84.6
I give little thought to my future.	4.8	38.5
I am looking forward to a successful career.	100	92.3

I have high goals and expectations for myself.	95	84.6
I don't expect very much of myself in the future.	0	23.1
Most things I learn in school are important to my future.	90.5	92.3
ACHIEVEMENT		
Overall, when I think about my classes...	**8th Grade**	**9th Grade**
I stop trying when I don't understand some things.	20	23.1
I believe I can always improve/improve.	95.2	100
In general, my teachers...		
tell me to keep trying when I struggle.	100	84.6
like it when I try my best even when I get a wrong answer.	100	69.2
tell me I'm doing a good job when I try my best.	94.7	76.9
let me know it is important to be successful in school.	100	66.7
never check homework to see if it is done correctly.	0	38.5
BELONGING		
Overall, when I think about my classes	**8th Grade**	**9th Grade**
I never have the opportunity to work with others.	10	38.5
my thoughts are accepted.	94.4	84.6
In general, my teachers		
encourage me to help others in class.	78.9	76.9
accept that different students have different opinions	100	69.2
value my opinions.	83.3	69.2
do not value different opinions.	22.2	8.3
CURIOSITY		
Overall, when I think about my classes...	**8th Grade**	**9th Grade**
I learn about things I did not know before.	90.5	84.6
I explore problems.	80	76.9
I seek solutions to complex problems.	90	69.2
In general, my teachers...		
want students to be interested in learning.	100	92.3
make me uncomfortable when I ask for help.	11.1	30.8
encourage me to learn new things.	95	83.3
discourage me from learning new things.	5.3	30.8
EMPOWERMENT		
Overall, when I think about my classes...	**8th Grade**	**9th Grade**
I am not allowed to express my thoughts.	19	38.5
In general, my teachers...		
allow me to make choices about what I learn.	89.5	53.8
ask for my opinions/ideas.	72.2	83.3
treat boys and girls the same.	55	66.7
make it difficult for me to "be myself."	36.8	33.3
EXCITEMENT		
Overall, when I think about my classes.	**8th Grade**	**9th Grade**
I leave with a feeling of accomplishment.	85.7	69.2
I am usually bored.	42.9	53.8
I learn about things in the real world.	81	61.5
I never have fun.	5.3	30.8

In general, my teachers... make class exciting.	66.7	58.3
MENTORING		
Overall, when I think about my classes.	**8th Grade**	**9th Grade**
no one encourages me.	23.8	41.7
classmates never talk to me about what I am doing.	15	38.5
In general, my teachers...		
care about my success in class.	95	92.3
serve as role models to me.	63.2	41.7
expect me to succeed and help me to do so.	77.8	92.3
care about my problems and feelings.	78.9	69.2
RISK-TAKING		
Overall, when I think about my classes...	**8th Grade**	**9th Grade**
I feel comfortable asking questions.	80	84.6
I feel comfortable going to another student for help.	95.2	83.3
In general, my teachers...		
do not allow me to explore as much as I want to.	15	30.8
encourage me to find answers on my own.	100	84.6
support me when I take chances in the classroom.	71.4	61.5
are too critical and insensitive to others.	5.3	30.8
SELF-CONFIDENCE		
Overall, when I think about my classes...	**8th Grade**	**9th Grade**
I am confident in my ability to do well.	90	75
I find it enjoyable regardless of what others may think.	60	38.5
I dislike almost everything I do.	23.8	30.8
I have a generally positive attitude regarding learning.	100	83.3
I set high goals and expectations for myself.	90.5	69.5
In general, my teachers...		
make me feel shy or uncomfortable around them.	10.5	23.1
think I am a poor student.	5.3	23.1

For example, the percentage of students in ninth grade responding that they do not make plans or set goals, or that getting good grades is not important to them, is twice that of eighth graders. Ninth graders are much more likely to feel tired and bored, to have trouble getting motivated, to be disinterested in things around them, and to be less frequently in a good mood than eighth grade students. Almost 31 percent of ninth graders respond that they have no fun in school, in contrast to only slightly over five percent of eighth graders. The percentage of ninth graders reporting that school causes them stress is twice that of eighth graders. Almost a quarter of ninth graders state that they don't expect much of themselves in the future, while no eighth graders express such low expectations. Over 38 percent of ninth graders state that teachers never check their homework; no eighth graders state that teachers never check their homework.

Students in eighth grade are more highly oriented to achieve, report greater feelings of belonging, and feel more curious, more fully supported by their teachers, and slightly more empowered than ninth graders from Tremont. Tremont eighth graders feel excited by class, and only 5.3 percent say they never have fun, in contrast to 30.8 percent of ninth graders. Almost twice as high a percentage of ninth graders say no one encourages them. 63 percent of eighth graders report that teachers serve as mentors, while only 41.7 percent of ninth graders agree with that statement. Again, more Tremont eighth graders feel encouraged to take risks than ninth graders from Tremont at the high school. The scores concerning self-confidence seem particularly noteworthy: they indicate eighth graders from Tremont are much more self-confident than ninth graders at the high school.

It is easy to undercut the importance of these discrepancies by attributing them to the tribulations of adolescence. However, that argument must be measured against the fact that ninth graders say they *feel* much worse than do students who are from very similar backgrounds, and whose only difference is that they are not yet at the high school. Surely, how students feel about their lives and about their school has value. If ninth graders from Tremont feel so much worse than eighth graders, then something in their lives is not going well. The most significant variable, besides possible onset of puberty, that differentiates these students is that they are in different schools.[102]

The Aspirations Survey looks for the degree to which a school satisfies preconditions the NCSA has identified as important for high aspirations. Comparing the responses of eighth and ninth graders shows that Tremont School does a better job than the high school in providing the setting in which students can develop high aspirations. The survey results also confirm informants' observations that fewer teachers at the high school check homework for accuracy or completion.

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[102] Principal Perkins states that the two groups of students are roughly similar in age and sex distribution, and both were considered to be "good" classes.

Qualitative Data

In 1996-97 the total enrollment of Mount Desert Island High School was 571 students, which was expected to grow during the next several years. Although some people see advantages to having combined the four high schools previously located in each of the island towns, others regret some of the effects of consolidation.

> Mrs. M.: I think myself, truthfully, the smaller high schools had a lot going for them. There was the closeness, everyone knew the other fellow. I have heard my grandchildren come home and I would say, "I read somebody's name in the newspaper" and I would say, "Do you know them?" and they would say, "Oh no,...you don't know hardly anyone. We get there, we go right to class and when the class is over we go to another class, then we go on the bus to go home. We don't know them." Whereas in the smaller high school everyone knew everyone and I think that, of course, this is the modern day and everything is different - the high school opportunities - but may not be better or greater.

Other parents suggest the children move to the larger school at a very important time in their lives. "When they are fourteen to fifteen years old children, boys and girls are at a very vulnerable time of their life. Their hormones are raging, they are maturing, and if...you put them into a situation like that, a big school, a lot of them will get lost, amongst the changes - it's sad."

A woman who was in the first class that went to the new regional consolidated high school describes what it was like:

> We were scrambling, trying to figure out what was going on - they were already forming their little cliques and groups. They [the kids from the other towns] were going skiing on the weekend....It was just like, I don't know what kind of world they are coming from, I am not a part of it, so I hung out with Tremont kids who were my friends....There were seven hundred kids [at the high school] when we started, we were the first year....I never felt so institutionalized in my life as I did there, it was so different, it was so different from Tremont in feeling, where you knew the people you were in school with, you knew your teachers. It mattered that you did well [at Tremont] because you are going to talk to your grandmother, or your mother...everybody knew everybody at 4H or church, it was a community....I couldn't wait to get out. I didn't even go to my graduation.

A current student talks about going to the high school:

> It was so hard coming from Tremont - we had thirteen kids, we were a small class and very close class. The first day of high school a bunch of us girls were walking around going "You know who that is?" "No, do you?" You go from one hundred fifty kids in your school to one hundred fifty kids in your class. And these kids have more money. Bar Harbor had about fifty kids in that class, so they all knew each other, they all knew someone. It was very hard going into that, 'specially you know people like "Where are you from?" and "Tremont. Oh" - and it is like "What did I do?" I am from Tremont. I am proud I went to Tremont. I liked it, I wish I was back there....I would rather be from here not Bar Harbor, where it is so big and you don't know everyone. I like knowing everyone, going down the road waving to people. I wave to everybody - and they wave back.

Moving to a larger school where they are not known is very difficult for some Tremont students.

The different teaching style at the high school may also alienate students. An experienced school administrator tells us:

> Sit in on high school classes and you get the picture fast, because teaching the majority, maybe not the majority, but there are enough teachers at the secondary level who are just dishing it out to the kids. I think Mr. X does a good job with kids...but you have an awful lot [for whom] the subject matter is all they see. They are just throwing the material out, throwing the assignments out, with not much concern as to the kind of effect.

A current student at the high school echoes this thought. "At Tremont, since it is such a small school the teachers can focus on students one at a time, but as there are so many kids here they have to take everyone at once, they can't stop what they are doing and help one person, they keep going."

A recent graduate, now studying in Boston, adds: "In Tremont you know your teachers really well, you spend almost your entire year with them - English, Math. I spent three years with them; I know them really well. You develop a more personal relationship, whereas at the high school there will be a few teachers you get to know." Though this pattern typifies the teaching in many high schools, it is important to note the difference because it may not best serve all students from small rural communities, or even any high school students.

A current student at the high school shows how size and distance make it difficult for students to get the help from teachers that they sometimes need:

> It is just one big class of thirty people. If you are not caught up, you can stay after school, but if you live twenty-five minutes away from the high school that is really hard if you are a freshman and you have to take the bus. Some teachers take it slow, others just go at their pace or don't go at all. I don't want to bad mouth them. I did not pass algebra because I could not keep up with the class.

> A group of students agree:
>
> Girl: I have Miss N. and she is a really great teacher and everything, but I am not getting the subject.
>
> B: What happens when you don't get it?
>
> All: You don't get it.
>
> B: Do you get help?
>
> Boy: It is hard to get help, the teacher has to be willing. I am not blaming the teachers. They have to give out, they have to put forth a major effort to give the students extra help because there are so many students to give extra help.
>
> Boy 2: 160, just freshmen.
>
> Boy 3: It is hard. If you have to ask the page number of the assignment she will say, "Didn't you hear? Go ask one of your classmates." She may not even remember.

Students are very forgiving of a system that makes it difficult for teachers to do a good job.

Teachers at the high school may suggest tutoring for Tremont students; however, for many this is not an option. Tutoring costs money and Tremont is located too far away from the high school for students to reach it easily, particularly younger students who cannot drive.

> Girl: With Miss D., you have a test. You fail a test. What makes you think you are going to pass the next test?
>
> B: Am I understanding - you are failing?
>
> Girl: That is what she told me.
>
> B: And you aren't getting the kind of help you got in Tremont?
>
> Girl: Oh yes. This is what she told me, "OK that is nice, I don't know what you want to do about it," and I'm like saying, "I just don't get it." I say, "Sorry, I don't get it" and she says "Sorry - you can get tutoring." I say, "No" [because my parents can't pay and I don't have transportation].

However, a former student notes: "I have never been in a class in the high school where the teachers didn't care, they put forth an effort," and her mother adds that the teachers just have "too many kids" to teach. An older student suggests the younger ones get turned off too easily:

> Senior Girl: You guys, the further on in high school you go the more you will learn to work with the teachers. Mr. X, he has been here until eleven at night - he is excellent - he will do anything. He gets you prepared for college. Let them [the teachers] get to know you. Some kids who were in my classes just do things to not let the teacher know how to treat them - so they get a bad grade, then the teacher doesn't know what to do.

Several of the teachers, particularly the Assistant Principal, are very highly regarded by parents and students alike.

Some students who have done very good work at Tremont begin to drift by their sophomore and junior years, just when they need to focus on what they will do when they graduate from the high school. A former student says:

> Actually I was headed more to English classes, writing classes, but my sophomore year...I got in really bad, that and I had an awful, he was a good guy, but he was an awful teacher....If you were there and you wanted to do something, you did it but if you didn't he just let you sit there. I need to be pushed, so I slacked off and I kind of failed in math. I ended up transferring after my sophomore year, I went up to Temple Christian....Yes, yes, you got pushed more at Tremont than in the high school.

And current students state:

> [Tremont] was more structured, the classes were more rigid; if you didn't hand in your homework you got in trouble at Tremont; at the high school if you don't do it, it just knocks your grade off, you don't learn anything from it until the end of the year and by then it is too late. You don't get detentions, they just say or you didn't do it, mark it down and that does nothing for you as a student, trust me, you sit back and you say, "Oh I didn't do it, he didn't say anything." Well you realize at the end of the year, wait a minute, and at Tremont definitely you did your work or you got in trouble.

Both these students said they now regret not preparing for college.

A young woman who attended Tremont School and graduated from the high school states:

> I think the main thing with the teachers are that, you know, I coach up at the high school, and I kinda would see it the same way. If I see a kid who wanted to go further, then I am going to spend more time on them; if I just see 'I am kinda of here, I am glad I got a uniform and leave me alone,' then that is what I am going to do. I think in grammar school it may be a little bit different; if you can't get a kid interested in grammar school then they are not going to be interested in high school. I think that is a big difference with the teachers there [at Tremont]. They know that and they kind of are after you to do better. I think there is a lot of encouragement. Science wasn't my big thing, but Mr. Sawyer was saying, "You really got to study a bit harder," and I'd say, "Oh all right." Then I did better, [got] a little bit of a kick.

For students used to the close attention of knowledgeable, caring teachers working with small classes, the less personal and more divided attention of teachers at the high school may not be enough to keep them focused on their work and away from distractions. However, students in honors classes receive individual attention working with teachers committed to preparing them for college. A young woman, for example, notes the importance of a high school biology teacher in involving her in the internship program at a nearby research center, which led her to study veterinary science. However, students who have done well at Tremont School but lack parental support for post-secondary schooling may begin to drift away from college preparatory work in the large and less personal atmosphere of the high school.

Some students encounter prejudice against "backsiders." Fear of being looked down on can make students apprehensive about going to the high school, as we learn when a recent graduate says, "I had the impression, I don't know who gave it to me, it wasn't a good thing, that the Bar Harbor and Northeast Harbor people wouldn't speak to you....I was afraid of it [the prejudice against Tremont] before I got to school, and once I got to school it didn't feel like that, but I have to admit I had never spent any time in Bar Harbor before the middle of my freshman year." A student at the high school notes, "We are backsiders because up until your freshman year you can't drive, you saw nobody, we saw them at dances, but no one mixed - Tremont was on one side of the gym."

A graduate of Tremont and Mount Desert Island High School states:

> I remember going from Pemetic to Tremont all the students said, "I can't believe you are going here." They looked down on it - Bar Harbor and Northeast Harbor are more upper class, Bar Harbor upper in business, then Southwest Harbor sort of getting to the fishing village but still a lot of boatyards - and look at Tremont mostly as the fisherman, and you have more of the laborers at Tremont. I felt some of it was sort of like different class issues.

And another recent graduate notes:

> When I was growing up until high school, and then when I was in grammar school, there wasn't even cross dancing - they would have dances, another school would be invited but no one else would come - but no one would come, especially not to the Tremont dances. I forget the words - kind of considered the hicks....Tremont definitely is different from Maine

> and the rest of the island. Bar Harbor, Southwest Harbor are much more [sophisticated], that is how we get the stereotype of being the hicks, because it is more a Downeast Maine type of environment.

Though diminishing, the comments of other island students can be wounding and defeating.[103]

The Principal of Tremont regretfully acknowledges that

> Tremont through the years has felt, and the kids hear it, that you are not going to get a fair shake when you go on to the high school. I know in many instances, especially in the sports programming, with teams [people think] "oh you are not going to get a chance because Bar Harbor and Mt. Desert and the other island schools will get it and the teams will be made up of [their kids]." And it sets the kids from Tremont for failure to begin with - if the talk is in the community as well as at home, "Well, why try?" And I have heard parents openly say and I know, I have heard them in the eighth grade say to me or to other people, "They won't have a chance, they won't make it - everything is cut and dried."

This concern is confirmed by many people, such as Shirley and John.

> B: When your kids were in Tremont and made the transition to high school, what were things like for them?
>
> John: Northeast Harbor and Bar Harbor came first and Tremont was third.
>
> Shirley: [laughs] Always.
>
> John: Always been that way.
>
> Shirley: "You backsiders," you know, something that will never go, that people will, it is just from one generation to the next, and it is really ridiculous, some of the best athletes in the high school have come from Tremont.
>
> John: Graduate from Tremont.
>
> Shirley: From Tremont, and some of the smartest.
>
> John: Once you get over there they pick from Bar Harbor and Northeast, and then if they need somebody else they pick someone from Tremont.
>
> Shirley: We found that out in sports....They [my sons] are excellent ball players and Will was probably one of the best, but it was a different story because they lived in Tremont and you can never tell me any different, never. They got on the team, but they sat on the bench a lot, until Richard got to be a senior and they found out what Richard could do, so Richard played some ball, but you know it was hard to handle for them, you know, and I imagine they still think about it, but you know it kind of aggravates you....You know, it is a funny thing, anyone else that has been in sports will tell you the same thing, this is not now, this is when a certain athletic director was there for years, too many years.

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[103] I was surprised when I met with Tremont students to administer the NSCA survey how quickly they began asking, in a somewhat defensive way, why I had called together all the "Backsiders."

It bothers current students when they don't feel they are taken seriously or given the same opportunities as other students from the towns on the island. When I asked if there were "any way in which you have felt there was anything negative about the way you were treated?", one boy responded emphatically, "Hell, yes," and others added stories in agreement, suggesting they were discriminated against because they come from Tremont.

A current student and her mother noted:

> Mother: Our sports program, you play ball, they got good coaches, but because it is Tremont, they [students] are the last ones looked at.
>
> Daughter: Definitely.
>
> Mother: .Unless they are super good ball players.
>
> Mother: I can think of two in the last eight years, but other than that you don't hear of any Tremont kids on the team.

They also believe that Tremont students do not have equal access to academic programs and that the high school favors college bound students over those in the vocational and business tracks.

> B: Have you ever felt the high school cares more about the academic kids who are doing the college program?
>
> Daughter: Definitely.
>
> Mother: I think that is common.

Belief that Tremont students do not get on teams or into special programs, academic and otherwise, makes access even more difficult for them, access that is already hampered by lack of transportation, distance from the high school, and poor preparation due to the paucity of programs and facilities at Tremont.[104] Though I cannot document the validity of these beliefs, the fact that so many people share them makes them deterrents to participation by students from Tremont in some of the most beneficial programs offered at the high school.

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[104] It is also possible that the students at the larger schools have learned more disciplined, team-oriented skills which transfer easily to high school play. Whatever the case, many people in Tremont think the students from Tremont do not get equal access to opportunities at the high school.

Family support for Tremont students diminishes when they go to the high school, as it does for many secondary students across the nation. Students and teachers comment on this. For example, the music teacher at Tremont, whose husband teaches music at the high school, says, "I've watched throughout the years as they get older in the concerts. The elementary school is full, the junior high not so full, in high school not nearly as many parents go. We need to have parents stay involved." The fact that this problem exists in many high schools - perhaps all - is no justification. The point here is that Tremont students see diminishing parental involvement in their lives at school as an issue that is exacerbated by distance, demanding work schedules, and financial considerations which make travel and taking off from work difficult for parents.

A former school administrator notes one reason: "The high schools in general I think do not encourage parents as much as they should." Principal Perkins suggests:

> When they moved to the high school, they [parents] did not continue that participation because of the competitiveness of the teams or because of the logistics of travel, because that has some bearing, the eleven or twelve miles to the high school or greater. I think they [students] lose some of that connectedness to the school. They drift to the fringe, I think they do drift off to the fringe.

Others note that parents may not feel as comfortable at the high school as they have at Tremont School and may not feel they have much to contribute to their child's schooling at the higher level. A member of the first class to graduate from the consolidated high school reports that her parents never visited the school once during the entire four years that she was a student. A former Selectman reports, "Some parents say this, they tell me, that when their children go to the high school their job is finished, they don't feel so capable and don't feel needed." A mother adds:

> I think that parents on the whole are a decent part of the kids lives, even at the high school. It is harder to be a part of their lives at the high school. It think it can be intimidating to the parents to try to go over to the high school and get information, not that the people aren't open over there - any one of us can go over there, but it is more intimidating. Tremont is so small and you walk through the door and you are right there, you go to the high school and you've got to find out where you are going.

A recent graduate says: "Well - there is a big difference between like the parent - teacher communication and a big difference in what the parents are expecting of the kids anymore, 'cause they think they are getting older."

Students now at the high school say:

> Girl 1: They [my parents] find it really hard to come here, 'specially going on to work - time wise, they don't have any time. They spend so much time running around they don't have enough time to enjoy.
>
> Girl 2: It is hard because they want to come to the games, but between work and other stuff...it is so time-consuming.

Students who do receive parental support seem to treasure it, crediting their parents with their successes and talking about how important their families were to their decisions about what they would do after high school. They say their families taught them values and made them feel appreciated. A small group of young adults, just starting their own families, state:

> Man 1: I think it still comes back to how you are raised with your family.
>
> Woman: [his sister]: Parents, definitely all parents.
>
> Man 2 [their cousin]: It all comes back to parents.
>
> Woman: There are a couple of kids on my team [she is a coach], you know you look at your sports teams and generally they are good kids, or they wouldn't be on the team.
>
> Man 1: There is too much to go through.
>
> Man 2: Right.
>
> Woman: There are always going to be a few strays, but overall they are the good kids in the school system. But this year was my weakest year as far as the team goes. It was also my weakest year as far as the parents following.
>
> B: Oh?
>
> Woman: And you wonder how much that has to do with it. I found even the parents who were there...I really found that the support, you know, I hardly had any. Maybe out of twelve I had maybe three maybe four, come up. I never had a problem in the past, they would come up; and I don't know whether it was a losing year, and you know, I am not really sure, but the parent following was so low this year.
>
> Man 1: And chances are that those three to four of the kids that had the parents that came are going to go to the next level, to continue [with sports]. If you don't have parent support your freshman year - if it isn't something that you are really feeling deep inside that you

> want to keep going, chances are you won't improve enough to go to the next level, the JV or varsity.

Parental support and encouragement offers students validation of their own worth and the importance of their work and activities at school. Students who receive this support are extremely grateful to their families and feel it was a critical ingredient in their successful completion of high school. Continuing support helps students continue to develop their skills and be on teams at the high school, which is gratifying to them and keeps their parents involved, which in turn develops self-confidence, self-esteem and a self-concept in which the individual maintains congruence between his or her ideal, perceived and real selves.

Parental support helps keep students involved in extra-curricular activities, which in turn seems to keep them involved with school and their academic work as well. Many people, including teachers, students and parents, commented on the link between involvement with extra-curricular activities and academic work. They point out that parental involvement is critical in keeping a student interested in such activities and that involvement with extra-curricular programs such as sports, drama, and music helps keep kids out of trouble.

> B: I have heard from other people that...some of the Tremont kids didn't have sports at the high school. Is there anything about the way the system is structured so those kids aren't pulled into something?
>
> James: I would say family support would be a big thing.
>
> Albert and Todd: Yeah.
>
> Todd: There was a lot of kids didn't do sports but they did band, and they did just as well in band as we did in sports and they followed that up.
>
> Trina: And drama.
>
> Todd: And I think the high school has one of the best programs in drama, that was a big help for most of the other kids, lots of good music support.
>
> B: How were you feeling support from your family for the things you did?
>
> James: They supported us in the things we did, which for us was sports. She did try the flute for a while, I didn't really get into instruments. It was support for what we did and we chose sports....What we chose was sports and they supported us, they took us to Peewee

Games and they would come to the games.

B: And the other parents, the kids who were drifting away?

James: I don't think they had support at home.

Albert: Yeah.

Involvement in extra-curricular activities provides a way to belong to a close-knit group and also a form of mentoring through close association with a sports or drama coach, or music teacher. The two-week practices held before school opens in the fall also seem to be a very useful vehicle for students from Tremont to make new friends and become comfortable at the high school. A group of recent graduates of the high school talked about the role of athletics for them.

B: What was it like going from Tremont to the high school?

James: I didn't want to go, I wanted to stay in junior high. I was fine when I got there. What helped was that all of us played sports and I think that is a big part; we go in August, there's no other kids there, but playing sports, you've got soccer practice.

Albert: Football too.

James: We were there in August with some other kids. We all had sports, 'specially our freshman year. We met kids from the other schools. So that gave us time [together].

Albert: Oh yeah.

Trina: We already knew them.

James: We played against them in junior high, so we knew *of* them. I wasn't much for going out anyway, so it is not like I'd meet them at dances, but playing against them we knew them well. These kids from Northeast and a couple from Southwest, and [I was] looking forward to playing sports with them. But when we got there for practice in the fall in August we met the kids we didn't know and I always had someone in the class, that or home room; I would usually have at least one I would be on a sports team with.

Albert: I would think that was a big advantage having sports, especially in August and stuff like that.

B: That makes a lot of sense.

Albert: Being a freshman like Jamie said, you get to meet lots of kids there and you get more comfortable and get new friends there than someone who doesn't do sports and you come in the first day of school and it is like - no one.

B: Did you see that happen to friends you knew from Tremont and Southwest?

All: Oh yeah.

Parents of children currently at Mount Desert Island High School agree:

> [My daughter] her freshman year went from Tremont to the high school; if it wasn't for soccer and starting two weeks before school started...that two weeks with friends.... Other freshman in the same situation from all over the island made the transition to high school within that first day, when all the seniors, juniors, and sophomores...she said, "I felt fine." She was very nervous about it, but soccer made the transition a lot easier. She was more scared of the other freshman. I was more nervous, but they had the two weeks of soccer and then they had freshman orientation....Extra curricular are very, very important.

Grandparents and other family members also commented on the importance of extra-curricular activities to students at the high school, though they did not link it directly to deteriorating academic performance. For example, a grandmother says, "Kids from Tremont now going to the high school don't participate as much in the activities like sports as they did in Tremont - like [my grandson], his grades are falling off."

Young parents think about their own children.

> Male cousin: You think about your [own] kids starting school.
>
> Female cousin: I think it will be fine. Whenever we did homework, Mom was right there. If you can start them out having fun doing it....I never had a problem going to school. There were times I had problems not wanting to get *up* to go to school, for the most part I had soccer, softball and basketball, I wanted to go.
>
> Male Cousin: The sports kept us going.

As noted previously, the impact of involvement in extra-curricular activities seems to be enormous and circular. Improvement often means that students proceed to the next level, which gives their parents more opportunity to support them and take pride in their achievements. Here a father shows what it means to him:

> They do other things too, the kids here are in the music program, and the pageants they put on, you get to the high school - I used to love to watch [my daughter]. We went to Jesus Christ Superstar - I walked out and I was grinning from ear to ear. I was basically proud....You sit back and say "that's my daughter" and all of a sudden these people are all standing up cheering and whistling, and hey that's my kid and it makes you feel pretty good.

Involvement in sports, drama, and music takes time and dedication, which deters students from being drawn into drugs and other less positive activities. It also focuses them on their academic work because keeping their grades above a certain level is required for participation in an extra-curricular activity.

Unfortunately, for many students at Tremont, particularly younger ones who depend on the school bus for transportation, becoming involved in extra-curricular activities is very difficult.

> B: How many of you are involved in extra curricular stuff and how was it getting in?
>
> All: Hard!
>
> Girl: I am a cheerleader - it took me two years to get onto the squad, because we didn't have them [at Tremont]....It was hard coming in. We don't have anything. In Northeast Harbor their parents play tennis, but we don't have any of that. I made it my freshman year, but I didn't get to play.
>
> Boy: There is only a few going out for the basketball team, just a couple who tried, it was really hard for us to make it.
>
> B: So a lot of the Tremont kids didn't try, is that what you are saying?
>
> Girl 2: To be on the team you have to show that you will do exceptionally well to compete with them.
>
> Boy: When we were at Tremont we had no problem - good in soccer, good in basketball.
>
> B: When you are younger, being in a little school you might get more opportunity to play and then you go to the bigger school. You are more capable because you have had more experience, but there is also more competition and they have a full size gym and that sort of stuff?
>
> Boy: Yeah - and our gym is a lot smaller.
>
> Girls and Boys: And Tremont is half hour from the high school. That is hard, 'specially for sports.
>
> Girl 3: Tremont is a bad location because it is so far from everything, and there are not very many people.
>
> Boy 3: Socially it is useless.
>
> Girl: Because not very many people from Tremont try out for things it is harder and harder to get rides home. You have to ask your parents, [which] is really hard, and they have to come and it is really hard as it is so far away.
>
> Boy: Things get done at eleven; we don't get home till twelve.
>
> B: What about your parents, how do they feel about coming to the high school?

> Girl 1: They get tired of always having to come - if, well, you get a ride home with someone else.
>
> Girl 2: But it is really hard to get a ride home.

The distance, the time it takes to get home, the unreliability of transportation, and the fact that few parents are easily available to pick up their children, all conspire to make it difficult for students from Tremont to participate in extra-curricular activities. When fewer students participate, it is even harder for others from Tremont to join because there is such a small group from whom to get a ride or encouragement to participate.

At the high school, students from Tremont encounter the more worldly lifestyle of students from other towns on the island and negative behaviors like involvement with drugs, cigarettes, and alcohol. One member of a group of high school students put it this way: "In Tremont school you are sheltered...you come here and you like, "Oh my God, I didn't know that!" Too many students from Tremont get pulled into this culture, something their families and other students fear. Students who are involved with extra-curricular activities or are clearly focused on a goal and supported by their parents seem to avoid such dangerous entanglements.

> B: Did you feel pressured by any other groups in the high school socially to join groups that maybe you didn't want to...to join groups that were not doing well academically or were into drugs?
>
> College student: Yeah, I can see that, I have seen that happen a lot. I never really did. I think people saw me as someone who was so innocent and completely straightforward, so I never really had anyone all the way up through sophomore year, nothing like that.
>
> B: In high school did you notice kids drifting away?
>
> College student: Oh yes, oh definitely, at the high school - different in Tremont - your gym teacher, mine was [teacher's name] my friend and coach, anyone who wanted to play played soccer. We all did it together, everyone felt included, and we didn't have so many in my class - between eleven and twelve.

Many students from Tremont do not get involved in sports, drama, or music at the high school, and people in the community worry that these students will get involved in other activities. Fifth generation resident Mr. R states:

> Part of it was the different group there - the Bar Harbor element I think more or less changed a lot of boys there....Lots of dope showed up, a lot of things like that they didn't have before, and Bar Harbor has had its inroads, people moving in, and they bring a lot of the stuff with them.

> And two younger people, a brother and sister, add:

> James: And we also lost the ones from Tremont. I knew all of them and had them all in the same class from K through eighth grade except a few who came in later.
>
> B: So you 'lost' them?
>
> James: There are bad influences as soon as you step across at least from Tremont at the high school. I can't speak for the other students, but I know what they were at Tremont.
>
> Trina: They teach the others trouble.
>
> James: They get in trouble with the teachers here but they weren't *trouble*. When you get in to the high school, it went beyond the teachers and to what you did after school and it was *trouble*.
>
> Trina: Who knows, who knows with the kids? The high school is different than when we went. I see it now, it's kind of scary actually.
>
> B: And how?
>
> Trina: Just the things, just the things that kids are facing, like drugs, and drugs are way more popular there than when I was there. When I was leaving, that next year I think it started taking a turn for the worse, my senior year.

A current student and her mother discuss the impact of negative influences on students who are not involved in activities at the high school:

> Mother: Our kids leave here sports being their whole thing. They get to high school, they don't get on a team, you look and see what they are doing instead, they are in drugs.
>
> Daughter: Really, my class, Oh my word.
>
> Mother: We can give you examples of those kids.
>
> Daughter: My best friend in eighth grade she loves courses, she loves books, she loves just learning. My freshman year, the first day of school she got in with that crowd.
>
> B: And this was mostly a crowd not from Tremont?
>
> Daughter: They were Bar Harbor kids plain and simple, and because I was not into that, I have never been into that, it was forget me. I got brushed aside and I wound up with other friends and stuff and I look at her now, a senior, and she is just getting out of the whole scene, and it has ruined her life, it is disgusting....My eighth grade year at Tremont I know of

> weird things [we did], like my nails, we did weird things with our hair, but it was never the drugs, never the drinking. It was just unheard of, and then you go to the high school and I am afraid it is common, it is every day. I was talking to [my younger brother]. It is going to be a change of atmosphere for some of these people, it is going to knock them off their feet. They are going to be sitting back going "What happened?" and their senior year is going to roll around. They are not going to know what's going to hit them.

Peer pressure and the desire for friends are very strong. Students who are not involved in extra-curricular activities and know few people at the high school can easily be drawn into inappropriate activities and friendships because students from other towns who are "on the fringe" are also looking for friends.

> Mother: So you go with whoever accepts you if you are not exceptional at something, if you are not a brilliant kid, but I mean you look at the kids and you know it is very difficult.
>
> Daughter: One boy made the team freshman year, but he didn't play much and that totally demolished him so he never tried out for JV.
>
> Mother: He got down on himself. If you are not into the studies, the ones that are don't want anything to do with you, so you are hanging out with the ones who are not so studious, so you are doing what they are doing, and drugs is a very big problem at MDI High School.
>
> Daughter: Yes it is.
>
> Mother: It is at all schools, but the island is not immune, it is a huge problem at the high school.

Residents of Tremont, though they are aware of drug traffic and use in the town, also believe that most of the students in the grammar school are well-insulated from involvement with drugs and other negative influences. Obviously, there are problems within some families, but people from Tremont seem to believe their children are "innocent" in comparison with students in the other island elementary schools. This leads to their concern that Tremont students will become involved with "negative" influences when they enter the high school.

Younger students from Tremont attending the high school feel frustrated that there seems no place for them to go. They aren't involved in extra-curricular activities, for all the reasons mentioned above, yet there is no place for them to gather after school.

> Boy: There isn't anything for us to do, no stores.
>
> Boy 2: There's no place to hang out at; at Tremont you go home and you are home, it is like six

> miles from anywhere. You can have more excitement on Swan's Island [a small, sparsely populated outer island].
>
> Girl: The main reason some people go to school is it is the biggest social place.
>
> Boy 1: Staying here is like eating the same flavor ice cream for fifteen years. We have no place to go. We need a rec. center, like Southwest Harbor.

Students, parents, and teachers identify another problem in the atmosphere of the high school that they feel is not conducive to good work: lack of discipline and respect. Many parents and teachers contrasted the behavior of students at Tremont and their respectful attitude towards parents, teachers, and other students with the less disciplined behavior of students at the high school. Many people felt this was a significant factor in the deterioration of student performance in high school.

Mrs. D., a Tremont School teacher, states, "Well I just think that maybe sometimes at the high school level there is less expectation as far as personal discipline. What is required is a laid back, lackadaisical atmosphere....I think the high school kids' [behavior is] somewhat less than...what we expect here. They are held accountable more here." A former School Board Member and long-time resident says, "They put up with too much foolishness at the high school." Another parent adds, "Discipline has broken down there." A former student responded to a question about work habits at the high school, "You don't care, there's not the same respect for the teachers, something happens." Another former student says, "I think the respect is gone [now], I still call my teachers Mr. or Mrs."

A girl currently at the high school notes, "With lesser amounts of kids there is more control [at Tremont School]," and another student and her mother discuss the differences between the high school and Tremont School:

> Mother: The other thing I have seen over the years that Tremont School has, and I don't think the high school has, is respect. We were always raised, there was a certain degree of respectfulness, whether you liked the teacher or not.
>
> Daughter: Definitely.
>
> Mother: That's not in the high school anymore.

> B: Do you think it is still part of the atmosphere of what is expected at Tremont?
>
> Daughter: Oh definitely.
>
> Mother: Very much, and I think that comes from a principal that is still the old age, [who] had a father who was a teacher, so there was along with the respect being taught to you in school because we had it all through high school. You talked to the teachers correctly or you were in deep trouble. These kids nowadays, on the whole have no respect for an adult. On the whole, they don't have respect for their school, they don't have respect for each other; it is not there. Tremont definitely it is still there.
>
> Daughter: You cannot imagine. I almost passed out my first day my freshman year when I heard someone call the teacher by their first name, that just was not done at Tremont.
>
> B: How do kids from Tremont handle if where you are coming from has a somewhat different atmosphere than where you are going?
>
> Daughter: I'll tell you a lot of the kids are still very respectful. My class, I know, you would never, there are very few who would act out against authority, disrespect authority, because that is what we were taught.
>
> Mother: I think Tremont kids on the whole have learned that.
>
> Daughter: Definitely.
>
> Mother: And if you learn it when you are young you carry it through the years.

Lack of respect for adults shown by students from the other three towns towards their teachers is something, then, that bothers people from Tremont.

People in Tremont identify reasons behind the change, which they see reflected throughout society, not just in the high school. A student and her parents discuss these possible causes.

> B: How do kids learn to be that way - respectful?
>
> Father: A lot of it right now has to do with the home life, mothers stayed home, can't do it now, can't have a family and not have both spouses working.
>
> Mother: We could do that with the first two kids, but there came a time you couldn't make it that way. I think there is a big thing, kids in their attitudes towards parents are definitely not the same.
>
> Daughter: I think respect is time at home.
>
> Mother: Parents don't have time to be bothered with these kids - why should the kids respect them?
>
> Daughter: It was never like that - it was always 'respect.'

This young woman has noted an important cause of the problem - lack of time at home with at least one parent, perhaps a by-product of a society that values materialism so highly.

Several people who graduated from the high school within the past ten years expressed concern that the atmosphere at the school had changed noticeably in a short period of time.

> Trina: I don't remember it [drugs] as much, 'cause it is the people you hang around, but I remember my senior year seeing it was starting to get worse, the 'crispies'[105] are coming in, the sloppy baggy pants, clothes, and I mean it is fine, but it is like some of my girls when we do go away, people do look at what you wear and if you wear hood clothes, whether you are in one or not, they start to associate it with [you], and I don't think kids understand that today. I remember when he played [pointing to her husband] he had a set of rules - you had to have haircut above your ears.
>
> James: Just the discipline of the people and what you had for discipline. I think society is letting people do what they want to do, whether it is right for a society as a whole or it is more of an individual thing, anywhere from your abortion issues to legalizing marijuana for medical purposes. Do you stop it there do you legalize it for everything?
>
> Albert: I think it is the same thing in school. My coach had rules. I am sure the coach has rules now, but they are not the same, even though he was actually a coach under my coach. He is letting a little bit more go....It isn't as important now today for kids to maintain a clean-cut image as when we went to school as athletes. You did, you know you maintained a little higher standard and nowadays it's not - grunge is better than being clean.
>
> Todd: I was a freshman when you were a senior, and I could see basketball, you dress up nice before games and away games, home games, and as the four years went on - we don't care what you wear, you can do whatever.
>
> Albert: The ten kids that were in my class, none of them played sports. There was two of us, one other one played a little but he didn't play much and when he went to high school he went nowhere. Two of them ended up in Hinckley School [for troubled students], most of the kids in that class were from broken families, it wasn't a good environment.

Students, parents, and grammar school teachers link lower expectations for self-discipline, attitudes towards work at the high school, involvement with drugs, and diminished respect for adults with less involvement with extra-curricular activities. It is not within the scope of this dissertation to research the validity of this connection, but I think it is important to note that it was made independently by almost all interviewees and focus group members.

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[105] This is the local term for "hippies," derived from the rumored self-immolation of a student at College of the Atlantic in Bar Harbor. When the college first opened its students tended to be liberal and hirsute, which caused friction with the local population. Over the years this has diminished, in part because many COA students work in the local schools and people in the communities have gotten to know and appreciate them.

Guidance counselors at the high school, as at most high schools, are responsible for more students than they can possibly know well. Two guidance counselors at Mount Desert Island High School work with 571 students and their families, overseeing placement in classes, guidance about post-secondary plans, as well as a myriad of other concerns. In addition, they meet with all eighth grade students who will be entering as freshmen to design their course of study. This is an impossible job, a legacy of James Conant's many unfortunate ideas for American high schools. There is no way the two counselors at MDI High School can effectively deal with so many students, or provide the knowledgeable, caring guidance students from Tremont received from teachers at Tremont School. Tremont parents reflect on the marginal impact the guidance counselors had on post-secondary plans for their children:

> B: What kind of guidance were they getting at the school. Did the guidance program help them?
>
> Shirley: You mean [States last name]? I don't know. Over at the high school?
>
> B: Yes.
>
> Shirley: Oh, I don't know. They suggested, I think, they gave them pamphlets, I don't know, I don't know. [states full name], isn't that his name? The only thing I know, they would have gone there for different brochures, because I know they applied for different schools.
>
> B: And when your kids went to the high school, you and the kids had pretty much decided what they were going to do?
>
> Shirley: They decided what they were going to do.

Present and former students from Tremont believe they are disproportionately placed in lower track classes and have a hard time getting the programs they want. Talking about his son, who later earned graduate degrees and now teaches at a highly respected seminary, a father says:

> The counselors over there told him he wasn't college material, then he had to prove he was. He was a late bloomer you might say, didn't know how to study, and that might have been the reason why they said that.

Students currently at the high school state:

> Boy 1: Last year the eighth grade teacher had told us a lot about it, and the guidance counselors from here came down, but they seemed kind of reluctant to give us all high level courses, like I have all honors courses, but he said, "You are going for a tough schedule," but it is simple.
>
> Boy 2: I didn't understand it when they was talking to me. I took six classes in the first semester when I didn't know....I had two study halls.
>
> B: You would have liked to take more?
>
> Boy 2: Yeah, get more credit.
>
> Boy 1: I am not trying to knock them - but Mr. X., it just seems sometimes he doesn't seem like he really understands what the kid is trying to say. You are saying you would like to take this class - you know better than anyone else, but it doesn't matter to them. They look at your report card, if you get D's and F's you can't do anything, A-B top notch, get C or B you stay in the middle. It [placement] is not anything about what you know you can do, or what they know you can do, it is just on paper, and that is just wrong, 'cause that is not right for learning.

An older student states:

> I had to take IFS [a lower track English course]. Mrs. N., told me I had to take IFS. I haven't been able to get out of both classes since, because they [counselors] are saying no - and I do real well, I get A's - I get A's in almost all my classes. "Oh no - you had better stay where you are," and I like to be challenged. I did convince them to let me go into higher math, so I am in advanced math, and the only reason is that I thought and thought and thought and I am real good at math and I like it, but before it was just like I had to struggle to get what I want.

The initial meeting at which students and the guidance counselors decide on the course of study, sometimes for the entire high school career, usually takes no more than fifteen minutes. One ninth grader commented: "The main thing is that they make you decide what you want to do before you actually know; the guidance counselor says, 'What do you want to do when you are a senior, what classes do you want to take?' Well, I don't know."

For some students, getting into demanding courses can be difficult. For others, getting approval for an easy schedule may be too easy. One parent, himself once a high school principal explains:

> I think a lot of times, though - the kids who have signed up for courses - that the parents have no idea. The parents think they are taking certain courses, but they are taking

> something altogether different. I know [my son] did. He wanted to graduate in the junior year, he had enough credits. I said, "You have plenty of time to work." He took seven periods of shop - all he did is horse around. That year was half through before I found out, and I was on the school board!

A member of the first class to graduate from the consolidated high school shows us how the lack of guidance affected a very able student who was not getting support from her parents:

> Dana: In the classroom everybody had equal opportunity to do whatever, if you had it. When I was a freshman, I was mixed with all the kids from the island in honors classes. I said, "OK, this is like, for the first time the slate is level, I can do this." I was prepared...in the classroom, and I went into honors math. I was two years in high honors. Then kind of like [one of my daughters] I wondered why am I working so hard, doing so well when I am going not anywhere? I switched from college to business [track] and played harder, so I ended up not going [to college].
>
> B: When you decided to change your program, what happened, you just decided on your own?
>
> Dana: Oh yeah, I didn't ask anybody and I felt really good about it...because I had taken charge of my own life, made my own decisions, even though it meant stepping back. It felt good. I felt, I can do this, I will do this my way.
>
> B: Did any of the teachers talk to you about this, the guidance counselors?
>
> Dana: No.

The structure of counseling at the high school, combined with decreasing parental involvement with the school and students, creates a situation in which students who are vulnerable may get lost. Very able students who lack parental or family support are also vulnerable as they confront a future that looks as if it offers only limited options.

A current student shares her opinion:

> Susan: You have to fight to get in to see the guidance. The one thing I would change in that high school is the guidance. That was the worst. I liked my guidance counselor [but] he is useless as a bump on a log....I like him as a person, but I am finding out things my senior year that I should have found out years ago. I mean but he tells me [about a requirement she must take] two weeks into the senior year. [There are] too many kids for too few guidance counselors. I like him a lot, I can talk baseball with him for hours, but if I am slipping in a class or I need something, he is not going to realize it because there are so many people in there every day asking about SAT and where I am in the class. Personally I could care less. So he doesn't think that much, I don't want to say he doesn't think about me, but I am not the first concern on his mind unless he realized hey wait a minute she is slipping in this class, but too many kids, so....When I went up to the high school, they put science courses on me, biology, earth science. I hated it, we had to work with fruit flies in biology...because that is what my guidance counselor thought I needed.

> B: Did he ever talk to you about it?
>
> Susan: We talked about it, but like I said I wasn't very vocal.

This student, like too many others, reserved her feelings and never talked openly with her guidance counselor because he had so many other students to work with he couldn't take time to get to know her and help her feel comfortable.

Students feel that they are well prepared at Tremont School to do the academic work at the high school; in fact, some feel they are over-prepared and that the work at the high school is undemanding and boring. One student put it this way: "We spent the entire eighth grade year preparing for high school. Then when we got here it was so simple." Another added that academically she felt "over-prepared," while a boy stated that his ninth grade year has been "kind of boring, very boring." However, students felt poorly prepared academically in two ways: first, the grading systems are different (at the high school 70 is the demarcation for failure; whereas at Tremont it is 60), which confuses and upsets parents and students; and second, the lack of equipment, particularly in science, art, computers, and theater made it very difficult to compete with students from the other island schools that are better equipped.

> Daughter: You go from a small school over to the high school and it is like you don't have the experiences that they do and that makes it harder to keep up with them. I could not have told you what a socket wrench is a year ago; I am in a shop class now and it....In Bar Harbor they taught these things in the school. I have no chance, I know nothing about them....It is harder for you to want to do something you don't know anything about when they have a background.
>
> Father: How do you expect a kid to compete with kids who have had it and kids who haven't had it and expect them to keep up with the rest of the class?
>
> Daughter: But we don't have a shop and we don't have a lab...or a theater.

One student says:

> We had something great, [we had] Mr. Sawyer, [who] is a great teacher. No we had no lab, there wasn't even a sink, just a poster of Einstein and a monkey.

And another boy adds:

> The teacher [at Mt. Desert Island High School] says, "Go get the beaker." The what?

Another student sums it up as follows:

> On paper this high school blows Tremont out of the water, but when you are actually here it is very simple [easy].

Strong teaching, small size, and one-on-one relationships between students and their teachers compensate, in part, for lack of facilities, but one result is an unforeseen problem.

Students see a gap between the way teachers at Tremont School view the academic demands of the high school and the reality they encounter their freshman year.

> Girl: When I was in eighth grade the teachers made it out like it was so scary, you are going to get lost.
>
> Many students, talking at once:
>
> You are going to have so much homework. You got here and you were so scared, and it was nothing. So simple....Nothing like they said. It is not what it made it out to be. Not at all.
>
> Boy: I swear C. left a trail the first day. He was bugging out, it was unreal. You are afraid you are going to get beat up by every other person. It is still like that now, not many seniors like you, for not apparent reasons, just 'cause you are a freshman.
>
> Boy 2: I think we just came into school just a little more prepared than the other kids. We had been told this [high school would be very difficult], so we were petrified. It was going to be a lot of homework, but we got here and there wasn't as much homework as they had told us and we said, 'Oh this isn't so bad.' See, a lot [of students] from the other schools, the high school kids from the other towns, they hear you don't have to take many courses, you don't have to take the hard courses...so when they got here they kind of had a big shock - 'Oh my god, why do I have so much homework?'
>
> Girl: I don't think they should have said all that stuff to us because you are already insecure about going to a big new school or whatever and adding that on top, it was kind of overwhelming.
>
> Boy: Your head just went into meltdown.

These students added that they got their information about the high school from the teachers, not from siblings or other students. They explain this as follows:

> Boy: My sister, she told me it is great, you always have someone to hang out with, to me it sounded really cool. But she was just one person, at that point I didn't trust my sister so much, it was just an overload of information about this place, from the five or six teachers you saw the most. It freaks you out.

> Girl: I am sophomore, my brother is freshman, and I remember telling him last year, you are going to love it, and then he was still listening to all the teachers, and I was like NO! He didn't want to listen because all the teachers there were saying it is going to be so hard. I said, "No, it is easy."

In their attempt to prepare students, teachers at Tremont may be over-emphasizing the rigors of the high school, particularly the academic demands. Students stated that the "Tremont teachers think it [high school] is much harder than what it is, when you are here it is actually very simple." A boy adds, "They [Tremont teachers] assume too much down there." This seems to unnecessarily intimidate students and may result in their placement in lower tracks and less challenging courses.

Summary

Important differences characterize Tremont Grammar School and Mount Desert Regional High school. These differences, including the high school's larger size, greater distance from homes in Tremont, relative lack of opportunity for contact with teachers, less involvement in extra-curricular activities, and exposure to some negative influences, make transition difficult for some students from Tremont. The high school does not offer the nurturing, supportive base for students that they received at Tremont School. As they make their transition, Tremont students move from the influence of teachers they have known for many years, and who know them, to a new peer group. They can get discouraged by the lack of adult support and the difficulties of maintaining aspirations for post-secondary schooling. If they are in a peer group that eschews the value of higher education, or their parents don't understand why they should go on in school, they are more vulnerable. Many are simply unable to sustain the goals they may have had in grammar school and cannot go against the values of a culture that tells them post-secondary schooling is unattainable and not worth their investment of time and money.

At Mount Desert Island Regional High School, students from Tremont enter a larger and different world. Many of them do well academically, socially, and in extra-curricular activities because they have been well prepared at Tremont School and have supportive parents. However, for those who are less confident, less sophisticated, or less assertive, the transition is difficult and goals to which they may have aspired begin to seem impossible to achieve. Just at the time they make this transition, the support Tremont students have enjoyed from parents, teachers, coaches, and their community diminishes. Because there is no place for them to congregate after school, such as there is in the other towns some students feel alienated and bored. It is as if having been nurtured on very rich milk they are weaned so suddenly that some find it difficult to thrive on the new diet. It is in the critical years of high school that some students find it too hard to hold onto the goal of continuing their schooling after graduation. For these students, what they perceive as the realities of adulthood in Tremont begin to cloud over dreams of childhood and they settle for a way of life that is becoming difficult to maintain without further education since few will be able to earn enough money to raise their own families on Mount Desert Island.

SKETCHES OF NORTHEAST HARBOR

Memorial Day, 1995

It is raining, the first Memorial Day any of us remembers that rained on our parade. "I've come all the way here from Florida to see this," he says, disappointed and feeling cheated. No bands today, no fire engines snorting through the crowd, no police cars or marchers, no children riding bicycles with cardboard carapaces cut and colored to turn them into tanks, no congratulatory embracing between returning summer people happy to have survived one more year and made it back.

Instead, we assemble in the gym, a stark old-fashioned box with shining wood floors and bleachers worn to soft sheen, the impressions of earlier fans concave in the seats. Now the gym is almost silent. On a sunny day people would have lined the streets while the high school and elementary school bands, coached by rivals, though husband and wife, volleyed with crashing cymbals and firing trumpets.

Today we have the flags, and five uniformed old men sit staring at us, arrayed like owls in a row, blinking and nodding. Mr. Harvey, the fish-monger, purveyor of salmon, cod and halibut, and proud head of the American Legion Post rises, no small accomplishment, and approaches the podium, anticipating its support with out-stretched hand. Blanched skin, red-rimmed eyes, jaw slack. He is the master of ceremonies, misinformation, and malapropism, which he has dispensed from this pulpit for almost forty years. "We fought in the great war, World War II, over sixteen million men fought and over 600 died." "Yes," I think. "But it was quite a few over before it was over, over there."

Mr. Charles, a tall bold man with defiant eyebrows and graying hair, stands erect and requires that we remember the debt we owe W.W.II vets like himself. He reads the list of men who gave "the ultimate sacrifice," mercifully the same names since Joseph Musetti fell in

Vietnam. Mr. Edgerley, the only veteran of summer, reads "In Flanders Field," strewing the bright poppies before us.

Finally, the oldest stands, but so slowly and so painfully, like a giant turtle emerging from the ocean, leaving the buoying hand of the sea. He struggles to resist his failing bones and muscles and sags backwards, but in a lurching act of will attacks and gains the floor, covers the ground, and assaults the podium. Pulling a folded paper from his pocket, he pushes it out to arm's length and then, lowering it, looks dead ahead and recites the words, "Four score and seven years ago...." The nerves dragging his mouth relax as he marshals the words and orders them to troop before him. His eyes begin to fire, he sees his objective. A smile passes over his eyes. "These hallowed dead...." The day is won, the victory his. He leaves the battlefield, a slowly moving monument.

And the man from Florida says quietly, "I think this was better than the parade. I am glad I was here for this."

Street Dance

The street awakens from sleep like dancers slowly stretching. With dawn in June the seagulls start pulling trash from the dumpster behind the market. Steve opens the market at five when the male chorus of delivery trucks brings food to town from all over the world: apricots from Australia, mustard from England, salmon from Idaho, pesto from Italy, and olive oil from Greece, just like "the old days" when Maine mariners explored the world.

The orchestra is just warming up. Carpenters arrive for work at seven and begin hammering and sawing in the woodworking shop where they restore fine furniture and carvings from summer cottages. This is "lying" season. "Yes, Ma'am, we'll have it all done by the 4th," though even if the carpenters, painters, caretakers, and gardeners work twenty hours a day the fireworks will be over, except in their customers' eyes. Children with their fathers pirouette and scamper to nursery school, chattering in high sopranos. Then the teenagers, a little grumpy, grudgingly walk to catch the bus to the consolidated high school - which takes them out of town for the day and sometimes into the evenings with rehearsals and games. Some of the older people in town say they miss the sound of teenagers calling and joking along the street. These aren't rowdy streetwise kids, but kids who still smile and wave even when they don't know you, just because you are passing on the street. Some affect Statement Hair, hair that begs you to look at it and be shocked and is a little disappointed when you know it still belongs to Joe or Tracy or Sally.

Bucky and George begin to sweep the streets, the town's offering of security for work. It is not clear if Bucky is George's brother or son or both, a Pa's de deux. Bucky and George dress identically - in summer, green worksuits and beanies with propellers or matching baseball caps; in winter, green worksuits with red and black plaid jackets and matching deer-slayer hats with the ear flaps pulled down. In unison they sweep, the swish swish sound following them slowly down the street.

Mr. Harvey is in the fish market now. He must be over eighty because he looks about the same as he did when I first saw him in 1948. A handsome halibut of a man: large shining eyes and a whitened face, cropped silver hair scaled back. Fresh crab today and salmon, though the store always smells of fish, and Mr. Harvey sits there all day waving to people and talking with friends who come in to pass the time and share news of the day. "Mary's gone on the ferry to see her sister, Eileen. Haven't talked in years." "Walter's building a chimbley for the new summer house on the point. Big house, big chimbley."

Pat opens the stationery and newspaper store, Steve opens the market to shoppers, and Buddy opens the hardware store. Anna opens her cafe, and then Earl opens the garage. In winter the boutiques that dot the street stay closed like blackened teeth in a smile; in summer they open, but not until 9:30. By eight the stage hands are all in place and some of the dancers move on stage from the wings of apartments over the street. Madge, who is over ninety and still cleans cottages with determination and gusto, walks along the street to do her errands. Katherine, her hair in curlers under a kerchief, smile twisting her face, walks from her dead mother's elegant cottage to town to shop each day. Sometimes people have a hard time understanding what she is saying because her tongue seems to be swallowing glue. When she takes her medicine she is all right; when she doesn't, she is depressed, but people watch out for her. When she thought of moving "home" to New York City, people convinced her to stay, fearing she would not survive long without the eyes and hands that ease her way though she is unaware of them.

The cats come out of houses: large coon cats with great long fur coats stomping authoritatively around town, walking in the middle of the road, and an orange and white marmalade cat that is so friendly it runs into stores to say good morning, then out and on to the next store. Coyotes have migrated to live in the woods around town and the cat population has thinned to those trained to stay in at night.

Dogs on leashes lead their owners on rounds, irritated by the freedom of the cats, but secure in their owners' affection and pleased by the attention they get from the people who know their names and reach down to pat them as they go to the bank and post office for treats. There are no strays in town.

Finally, the boutiques open. The Kimball Shop is the Grande Dame, once owned by the largest lady in town, spinster Miss Kimball, who walked out of a Dickens novel to capture children by an ear if they dared misbehave. Her once impenetrable warren of goods now offers elegant china and crystal, wonderful varieties of toys, and colorful hand-woven rugs, assembled by her niece, the best of everything from everywhere. The Romantic Room flounces open, laces and petticoats shaken out in the sun, and thick sweet boudoir smells advance into the street to lure shoppers to its chamber. Wini opens her gallery with the endless scenes of Maine she paints, sometimes from her home in Florida, but always true to a long memory or photographs of the places she loves. At Local Color, the elegant and creative clothes like painting by Mondrian and Matisse glow in the window to rival the jewelry and the rich colors of ceramics and crystal that catch the morning light in Sam's clean white shop across Main Street. This town is blessed with skilled artisans and beautiful objects for us all to admire, even if we all cannot buy them.

But at ten the formal dance begins. Limbered up we gather at the Post Office. There is no mail delivery in town. If you want your mail, you have to go get it. Rob, the 6'5" librarian with full beard, fisherman's cap, pipe, and story is always there at ten. He may not look like a summer person, and by now maybe he's not, but then again he is not a native. The stories he remembers and creates in his deep sonorous voice, always punning and teasing, are legendary.

Everyone has to come to the post office. It is a marvelous leveler. Of course you could send someone to get your mail, but that would take all the fun out of it and make this little village seem too much like a town. And we know how to provide protective cover for our luminaries. For years tourists enjoyed taking one of the cruises up Somes Sound to look at the cottages of the rich and famous, not knowing that one of them had just been sitting talking with the boat's captain for the previous hour or so, something he relished every day. When the captain took his boatload of gawkers past the house, he would say, "And this is the house of...." But he would never reveal that they had just left this man sitting on the bench in a frayed madras jacket, splotched white tennis hat, and sunglasses, watching the harbor and the tourists who would soon enjoy their visual invasion of his house and their brush with his celebrity.

People step into the post office: older people with elegantly coifed hair done weekly by Henri, who was born in Bar Harbor but learned to spell his name with an "i" when he cut their hair in Georgetown and Palm Beach; people who leave their hair in pincurlers; teenagers who drive Mercedes and teenagers who long to borrow the family Toyota truck; little girls in Liberty dresses and little girls in pink spandex from Walmart's; men in Hemingway caps from Peterman's catalogue looking slightly like pelicans; and men in sweat-grimed caps. All bow and wave, shake hands, kiss cheeks, smile, and grin at the delight of sharing each others news. Of course, there are those who turn away, shunning each other due to ancient insults revived each day.

Some people arrive early and stay late, sorting mail and throwing out circulars so they can see other people. The Postmistress told me she dislikes sorting junk mail only to have to deal with it all again when she hauls out the trash baskets. She also told me that some people come to get their mail fifteen to sixteen times a day - though mail is only delivered once a day.

"There's Nobody Here"

The little stationery store is a welcome haven in the morning because it stays open throughout winter while most others close. Many of the lights in the windows of the town go out in fall, like the individual flames that make up a fireworks flag, brightly burning and then fading one by one only to sparkle again in early spring. It used to be that "the season" was July through Labor Day; now it is longer, but fewer people live in the town all winter. Every house the summer people turn into a "cottage" becomes a home for people who are here for a month or two but don't send their children to the school and don't buy in the market, the drugstore, or the shops. And so stores have to close.

Peg serves up papers and magazines, stories of ailments - hers and others, news about anyone and everyone, and a chance to talk with her huge brown tabby coon cat, George. The spring after my first winter I walked in to see Peg. For the first time, I had a glimmering of an idea of what she really thought of summer. "Peg," I said, "when I was a child I thought this place went into suspended animation and waited for us to come back. Now, I am not looking forward to summer. I don't want all those people to show up again."

"Baabra," she replied, "Ralph says he just wishes they would send their money and stay home. Some of them are nice and some of them are my friends. But you can keep the ones who think they are so mighty they can tell us what to do. You know, in the old days we would step onto the street let the summer people use the sidewalk. Now, if we do, it is because the tourists move slowly."

Memorial Day Weekend: the store is crowded. A line of people waits by the cash register. I go to the back of the store to find a folder for a paper I am working on. As I turn to face Peg at the register, a "summer" person comes in and sees her friend, whom Peg is serving. "Babbie!" she shrieks. "How divine to see you. How was your winter? Isn't it fun being here early? But there's nobody here. There's just nobody here."

I look at Peg, smile, and then we wink. The flicker of lashes disguises an underground signal, a code. "They are back."

"I'm here," I want to say, "and so is Peg, and we've been here all winter."

CHAPTER NINE

Connections

Pressure to Continue Schooling

There are tremendous pressures on students as they decide whether or not to continue their schooling after high school. Though most students say they want to go to college or vocational school while they are in grammar school, too few are able to keep to this goal. Students in the elementary school, as well as the high school, are aware of pressures to continue their schooling. My informal observation, confirmed by data from the survey, suggests that students in sixth through eighth grades seem quite hopeful about going on to college, but by the time they are sophomores or juniors in high school many students no longer think they can go to college.

Some of the pressures come from the larger society. Many agree with the observation of a former selectman of the town: "People with high school education now are not able to go out and get a good job, it is beyond them. they are just not able...." Teachers at Tremont School encourage students to continue their schooling, and some students are encouraged by their parents or grandparents to go on to vocational school or college. This is most often true of the children of people who have themselves graduated from college and of people who have moved to Tremont from away, people who tend to have advanced degrees. A student now in college reflects this expectation and encouragement.

> I personally was always going to college. I was never not going. As far as I remember, everyone else in my family went, even my parents went. I may not have thought about it, but it was never really a choice; as far as getting into honors classes - I just always was, like even in New Jersey - that never really changed.
>
> B: Where does the message come from?
>
> The parents, maybe, I'd say a lot of the kids' aspirations about themselves start from the parents, I know mine probably did. I don't think mine came from the school because before I moved to Maine I was never in a school for more than two years; Tremont was the first school I was in for three years.

There are parents in Tremont like Shirley and John who have not attended post-secondary institutions yet have encouraged their children to do so. Shirley married John after his first wife died and he had already raised a family of five, none of whom went to college. Shirley was from Connecticut and insisted that the five children she and John had together would have the chance to work for post-secondary degrees. Against powerful odds, including serious health problems, this couple, neither of whom attended college and whose means are limited, were able to help their five children achieve this goal.

> B: You were able to have some money to help the kids?
>
> John: Not much, I had a heart attack while there were four in college.
>
> Shirley: And, you remember, I had cancer.
>
> B: And I thought I was having a tough time!
>
> John: That's right.
>
> B: But were you encouraging them?
>
> John: Oh yeah, we did all we could do, they all *all* got...
>
> Shirley: Scholarships. You know we applied for everything because Tremont kids don't fare out quite as well as Northeast Harbor or Bar Harbor, but we have a lot of very good local scholarships, you know in Southwest Harbor, and Tremont comes underneath that, so they did well in scholarships. Well, in fact even today Tremont and Southwest Harbor get good money. And that is the point. I was determined that my kids were going to graduate from high school and go on to further their education. I mean living in the area, what is there besides fishing or being a carpenter or working at the boat yard or doing whatever?
>
> John: You got to have more than high school education. You got to go to college to take up whatever work you are going to do.

A divorced mother of two, who wanted to go to college herself, has been able to help her own daughters go to college because of the legacy of this dream, the result of encouragement from her aunts and grandmother who were teachers.

> I didn't even think about going on, [it was] not possible the way things were, but I knew that was the way to go. I knew that is what you should do, that is the way it is supposed to be, if there is any way possible to go on. So I always knew I was going to try to send my kids to school, and I wanted to be a teacher myself, that is what I would have liked to have done,

> but couldn't; what I wanted to do wasn't very reasonable, but I knew. I didn't do that, but I taught my kids - I was their teacher, and I volunteered at Tremont School.

A much younger couple, with children in the grammar school and high school, want to offer the opportunity to their children, even though neither of them attended college.

> They know they are all going to finish high school, and I have told them they are all going to college. I have tried, all three of my girls are good friends, they can come and talk to me about anything. I have tried to teach them that no matter what it is they can come and talk to me. I feel they do, and the girls, well Rebecca she has always known what she wants to do, she wants to finish school and she wants to go to BU, she wants to get a good job where she can carry a brief case and she wants to come home and have her husband have dinner all ready for her.

And other students state that their parents encouraged them to go to college and vocational school.

> When I was little, I wanted to be a doctor. I knew when I was a little kid talking with my Mom. In my senior year I had no desire to go. I got there, I only needed one credit in English to graduate, and 3/10ths in phys. ed. and I didn't feel there that it was worth my while being there all day. I asked the Vice Principal about a work study, but since I was going to college prep they wouldn't let me. So I didn't know what I wanted to do, no idea where my aspirations were. [It was] Dad's fault I went to nursing school - a friend and I were going to travel and he had a fit. Mom talked me into applying to Husson. I got in and I am happy I went, I would never give it up now. It was kind of fortuitous.

Other students acknowledge that they are pressured by the media and "society," which tell them that they will not get good jobs without a post-secondary education. A group of cousins discusses the issue:

> Cousin 1: In other things I slacked off; as far as going on to college, I assumed I had to, not that I had to but that I was going to. I guess that was the next thing to do.
>
> B: Do you know where you got that feeling from?
>
> Cousin 1: Probably just from society. I don't think I got it so much from my parents, because my Mom only went one year, and that was that. And Dad went one year to vocational and I don't think we knew that they went to college and I don't think they said, well they didn't say we had to but more - so, if you are getting good grades, then that is what you are doing - the next thing you do.
>
> Cousin 2: You are also told by the media through everyone that you need a college education.
>
> Cousin 1: Through your classes even.

> Cousins: Right.
>
> Cousin 1: You need two years of French! [laughs]

Parents who do not have post-secondary schooling may recognize the importance of further education. However, it may be difficult for these parents to tout the benefits of schooling when they have no personal experience of them, when tuition is so expensive, and when the loss, even temporary, of their children is costly and painful.

Pressures Against Post-Secondary Schooling:

The pressures against going on to post-secondary education are very powerful and originate in local, state, and national culture and history, as well as in the current economic situation. It is very difficult for some students to overcome these barriers to post-secondary education. Former students who are in college or have graduated discuss classmates who did not continue:

> Seth: Yeah, yeah one kid in my class, [his] father was a lobsterman. [But it is] not just lobstering, other jobs that the parents have, the kids usually work, landscaping, everything - a lot more physical labor done by the people in Tremont than people in Northeast Harbor.
>
> B: At Tremont, think about the other kids who were in the same class but not headed in the same direction. Were there any ways they were getting a message that they were headed in a different direction?
>
> Seth: Well yeah - a couple of them obviously I went to school with...but as far as I know "G" and "H" were the only two, three, with me who ended up going to college. "A", his father owns "Apple" Construction, but I doubt he ever thought he was going to college, never stressed, vocational maybe. "B" was an extremely bright kid, but extremely shy and socially withdrawn. I don't think he has gone to college yet - he is pumping gas. Guess now he has kind of lost it.

A young woman who is a college graduate states:

> Rachel: I think as children we weren't pushed for it and I think sometimes we weren't thinking that way [about post-secondary education]. [We were] geared more to - well I am in high school now, I am going to get this job now. A lot of the kids I knew in Tremont, the kids ahead and behind, would work for Gott's in the summer and that is what they did after high school - there wasn't the ambition....I think it was already an established job, why go on, why go to school for four more years or however long [when] the big business was working for [construction companies]? A lot of kids depend on it, so they want to stay.

Shirley and John, whose children did go on after high school, talk about children and the community:

> Shirley: A lot of them didn't care.
>
> John: Didn't have the scholarships, didn't start with....
>
> Shirley: Didn't have anyone to push them I suppose....
>
> John: Lot of them are fishermen, they figured that was what they were going to do, go fishing.
>
> Shirley: Their father fished, their grandfathers fished.

They make three important points: children need someone to serve as a model, that many people in Tremont think that family tradition is important, and that "what was good enough" for the grandfather is "good enough for the grandson."[106]

One of the college students points out that there are cultural differences between people living on the opposite sides of the island that deter students in Tremont from continuing their education.

> B: What differences were there between the kids who went on and the ones who didn't?
>
> Seth: Well less money, the statistics are there...people might as well be on a different island, just cuz the whole aspirations and the whole mindset between the two sides of the island are totally different. If you look at the statistics, it is just that the kids are different.

Many children who have worked with parents and other relatives in family owned businesses don't see a connection between investment in post-secondary education and rewards in either securing a job initially or succeeding in the job because they are more highly educated. A young woman in college outside Maine says:

> I think a lot of those families didn't go to college and their parents didn't go and they don't consider it particularly important to go to college because it isn't a part of their vocation. So

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[106] Please note that I am not arguing with the importance of family tradition, or suggesting that any way of life is not "good enough." I am just pointing at factors in Maine culture that influence students' decisions about post-secondary education.

> they don't think their children need to go. All the kids I know of from my class who didn't go to college, their parents didn't go, only "X" and "Y" did [and their] parents did go.

In fact, being better educated may seem almost counterproductive. John reports his son's feelings: "I said, 'Look, you graduated from college,' and I says, 'don't you use it?' And he says, 'How the hell can I make a living [here] at what I went to college in?'" Another older man adds, "Yes, we see quite a few college graduates who come back and go lobster fishing, when they see that they say 'Why do I need college?'"

Former teacher Mrs. L. reflects:

> Mrs. L.: In my opinion, one reason you don't have more people going to college: we have seen people go to college and come back and go fishing. The fishing industry is a major thing in Tremont, the money they can make in lobstering and scalloping and whatever is a big incentive. "I've been to elementary school that is all I need."...I think that you read so many times about students that have gone and gotten their BS and BA and Masters and everything else and [then say], "I came home and I couldn't get a job and I am working at Walmart's," or [as a] MacDonald's sale clerk or something. Maybe that is a turnoff - you put all that money into it over the horizon - I don't know.

A mother describes her son's experience:

> He's 26 years old, he's got two masters licenses and he's making more money an hour than men who have been at jobs for forty years, and he's not got a college education. MDI offers vocational education to a high degree and...kids can go out in the real world and get a job that can be a rest of your life job or...a stepping stone to a later education. I think a lot of that makes a difference, plus the economy now, a lot of parents can't afford college....We could not afford to send him to college, could not do it. We hear stories of these kids who go to school for four to six years get out and come back and drive a truck.

Her daughter adds: "or work at a convenience store," and her husband agrees, "or work at a boatyard - sweeping floors, it is crazy."

A former selectman, who is a fifth generation Mainer from Tremont, and an experienced school administrator from Tremont both agree that the ready availability of jobs along the coast that do not require post-secondary education is another disincentive. They believe this helps explain why a larger percentage of students in much poorer counties like Aroostook continue their education after high school.

> Administrator: Some think it is real easy, "I can be a lobster stern man." If he gets into it direct, he can make $50,000 a year and then it becomes too late to have other options. We have construction, the amount of construction on this island is all out of proportion to the population.

> Selectman: That is why we have the higher dropout rate. Aroostook County, they don't have a high dropout rate because those kids are sick and tired of picking those spuds.

The perceived limitation of the white collar job market affects the way young people look at the future and influences their aspirations. The mother of four young people who have grown up in Tremont notes:

> One of the things that holds people here and has them not going on to college, they have to work in high school to survive, now kids nowadays are getting jobs in high school, some of them get into these jobs and they know that the job market out in the world now is so bad they don't want to give them up. They have a good job, they have had it in high school...they don't want to give those jobs up to go get an education to have to come back and work the same jobs.

Her daughter adds:

> Job security. They don't want to go fight and have to find a job. Right now I am a senior and I don't know what I can do, my grades aren't really good enough to go on to college. I'm working two jobs and the future is looking very bleak right now. I mean, I clean on Sundays and I work making pizzas. I mean they are jobs, but it's not something I can survive on after high school, and my grades, I mean they are just not good enough, they probably could be.

Poorly educated workers are less likely to create new businesses, products, or ways of doing business than those who move to Maine with more developed skills. It is ironic that immigrants to Maine from the late 1960s through the 1980s tended to be "relatively young, well-educated exurbanites with professional or managerial training or experience, much like the class of out-migrants" Maine had lost earlier (Condon and Barry, 1996:555). Many of these people used their expertise and initiative to start businesses, particularly in coastal counties (Condon and Barry, 1995:563). Richard Sherwood alerted Maine people to this trend in 1979 (he up-dated his figures for me to 1989), in the process discrediting the idea that a Maine student with college or graduate education would have to move out-of-state to find challenging work.

TABLE NINETEEN
Maine Labor Force

	1979 Distribution		1989 Distribution	
	Born		Born	
	Maine	Elsewhere	Maine	Elsewhere
High Status Jobs	60%	40%	53%	47%
Total Labor Force	73%	27%	67%	33%
Under or Over Representation	-13%	13%		
Workers with Graduate Training	39%	61%	33%	67%
Total labor Force	73%	27%	67%	33%
Over or Under Representation	-34%	+34%	-34%	+34%
Workers: Training After High School	63%	37%	57%	43%
Total Labor Force	73%	27%	67%	33%
Under or Over Representation	-10%	10%	10%	10%

Richard Sherwood, private correspondence

The cost of a college education, even the cost of public education in the State of Maine, is exorbitant and seems prohibitive to students and their families. For students who may not, for a variety of reasons, want to leave home to study, the high cost of a college education provides a reason not to continue their schooling. Because few parents have been to college themselves or feel a responsibility to pay for post-secondary schooling, and because guidance is fragmentary and depersonalized in the high school, young people are left to their own resources, resources that seem inadequate for such a daunting task.

A recent study by the Finance Authority of Maine suggests that the primary reason students do not continue their schooling after graduating from high school is this enormous cost. I agree that the price of a college education in Maine is a tremendously important consideration, but I contend that it is only one of many factors. Certainly the people I interviewed put cost high on their list of deterrents to post-secondary schooling.

> Mr. R.: I really think the reason for the drop-off in going to college is that they are scared by the price of higher education today....I believe that the difference, a lot of it, is because of the cost of education in the college. And if you look at it, I think the parents and the students get turned off when they see the large cost. They don't see that at Colby or Bates they might get more on scholarships, and the University of Maine is of course lower in price.

> but they don't realize there are a lot of extras that aren't there and are in private schools, and I think that turns them off.

College education has always been expensive for Maine students.

> Mrs. M.: I know way back when I used to be going to school they would tell how much cheaper it would be if we took courses out of state. Many of the kids, they would go half way across the country - way out of state to a college you never heard of before because it wouldn't cost them anything like it would at the University of Maine.

The reasons behind the high tuition at the University of Maine are complex and not the province of my research; however, I find it interesting that there seems to be a long tradition in Maine of sending students to college out of state. I wonder what lies behind this policy, because it seems remarkably short-sighted.

The son of a college educated father who started a local business that has grown enormously over the past two decades is a good example of a person who weighed the cost of post-secondary schooling against the opportunities available to him without another degree.

> B: When you were in high school did you ever think about going to college or vocational education, or did you pretty much know [what you wanted to do because] you had worked with your father since you were very young?
>
> Carl: I always, I always wanted to do this and I knew I was going to do it, and I just decided I was going to do it. I don't know if I was going to have to do it, but supposedly I was going to have to pay for my college and so I got out of school and went to work and didn't take too many days off for a few years.

As the oldest son, this young man looked forward to working in his father's successful business, and the cost of schooling did not seem worth the rewards. His experience underscores another problem many young people face. Parents who paid their own way through college may not expect to pay for their own children; however, the cost of a college education has escalated so much in recent decades that it is extremely difficult for young people to deal with the expenses on their own.[107]

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[107] "The average college student's debt burden has more than doubled in the past six years, largely because of higher tuitions and a shift in financial aid from grants to loans...." (The Boston Globe October 25, 1997:A-1).

As mentioned earlier, there is a long tradition in Maine of paying as one goes, avoiding debt by doing without. This tradition deters some people from taking out loans to pay for post-secondary education, but as shown in the following example, some Mainers risk debt to invest in equipment for traditional occupations.

> B: Many people have suggested there is a fear of going into debt. It is like the two things are pushing, the fear of going into debt and the high cost of education.
>
> Mr. R.: Boy, I don't know, hard to pin it down. I used to be on the committee for scholarships. You see the cost of these colleges. At MDI, they were picking some of the really high high ones, especially Harvard or any of the league colleges. But they are going into debt for $120,000, a lobster fisherman, they go into debt, as much as that, a new boat, traps.
>
> B: What is the difference there?
>
> Mr. R.: That they know what they are getting into.

But there are also people who identified a post-secondary schooling as important to their children, and against enormous odds, were successful in helping their children attain this goal.

> B: When the kids were growing up, were there other people in your family or in the community who were pushing education the way you were?
>
> John: No, nobody had any money.
>
> Shirley: No! [said with disgust]. If it weren't for local scholarship money and the government scholarships, they never could have gone because we couldn't afford it. Later, when they got into school a year or two they took out their own individual loans, in fact my daughter-in-law...is still paying hers off, the other kids have finished. If it wasn't for scholarship money a lot of kids in the area that go could never go, moneywise.

Shirley and John were not able to give their children money, but they encouraged them to go to college and worked to find scholarship money.

A college student adds, "One of the first things that comes to mind is money, but we don't have a whole lot of money and [my college] helps me. Money might not be all of it. Without really looking into it, it might seem that way. Sometimes they think it is impossible, 'Oh, I can't go,' because they don't know a whole lot about it." So the fear of paying for college deters many families and students whose families will not help them pay for college tuition. However, as these people show us, it is possible to go to college if you have stamina and determination to reach that goal.

These families prove that "if there is a will, there is a way," suggesting that the reasons students do not pursue a college education are probably more complex than that they lack sufficient funds. John and Shirley show that with determination families and students can avoid burdensome debt.

> John: There are all kinds of scholarships if they would only try.
>
> B: If they would only try, what do you mean?
>
> John: There used to be hundreds of them. There are all kinds.
>
> Shirley: That nobody knows about, is what he means.
>
> John: Right, nobody knows about them and, I mean the kids don't, they don't go to find out where they could find out.
>
> Shirley: You know what I did? I hired a friend of mine who was a teacher at Tremont at the time and he filled out the scholarship applications. I got to the point where I said, "No, not again, I can't do it." "There's nothing to it, bring 'em down," he says. And I give him a dozen eggs or, if we were picking, crab meat. I says, "I dread it just like my income tax," but he used to do all my scholarship forms. That is half the battle.
>
> John: He knew what he was doing and how to do it, we didn't know.

Shirley and John were able to help their children implement a vision, but few children are so fortunate, and many factors besides lack of money limit their horizons.

Another important factor determining which students pursue post-secondary education and which do not is the level of their parents' schooling. In a community where only 16.8 percent of residents have a college education, we should not be too surprised that few high school graduates complete a college degree. I think it is surprising only when measured against the success these children have had in elementary school.

Teachers, parents, and students talk about the difference between the percentage of students going on to post-secondary schooling whose parents went (who tend to be "from away") and those whose parents did not (who tend to be native-born residents of Tremont). One person, himself a native, comments: "It would be interesting to look at some subgroups - or would you be accused of being a female Charles Murray,[108] or something, if you look at natives as opposed to those who have come "from away." While a teacher says:

> Mrs. D.: I had two thoughts about people from the community: people who had a tough time in the high school feel that they were not that well accepted at the high school - not very positive about the experience, [which they] pass on to their children unknowingly. I think in addition to that, there are many people in this community for whom eighth grade was their highest expectation.

A parent states:

> It would be interesting to get the doctors at the Jackson Lab - their children have all gone on to college - versus a few people from each community that don't have college education themselves, whether their children would, I don't know what the percent would be, but I would sooner say those children of the doctors would more readily go on say, than my children would. People who have furthered their education tend to encourage their children to further theirs.

Although the high school does not gather statistics on students who have left to determine whether or not they went on to post-secondary schooling, or to differentiate students who were "from away," or those whose families were college trained professionals, a study I conducted in 1995 (Chart Five) shows that students from the other island towns graduate from high school at a higher rate than do students from Tremont and that students "from away" are more likely to graduate from high school than native-born students. This also suggests that the number of students from Tremont who go to post-secondary institutions after high school is lower than it is for students in the other island towns. Interview data further indicate that the rate at which students from Tremont go on to post-secondary schooling is considerably lower for students whose parents did not attend any post-secondary institution.[109]

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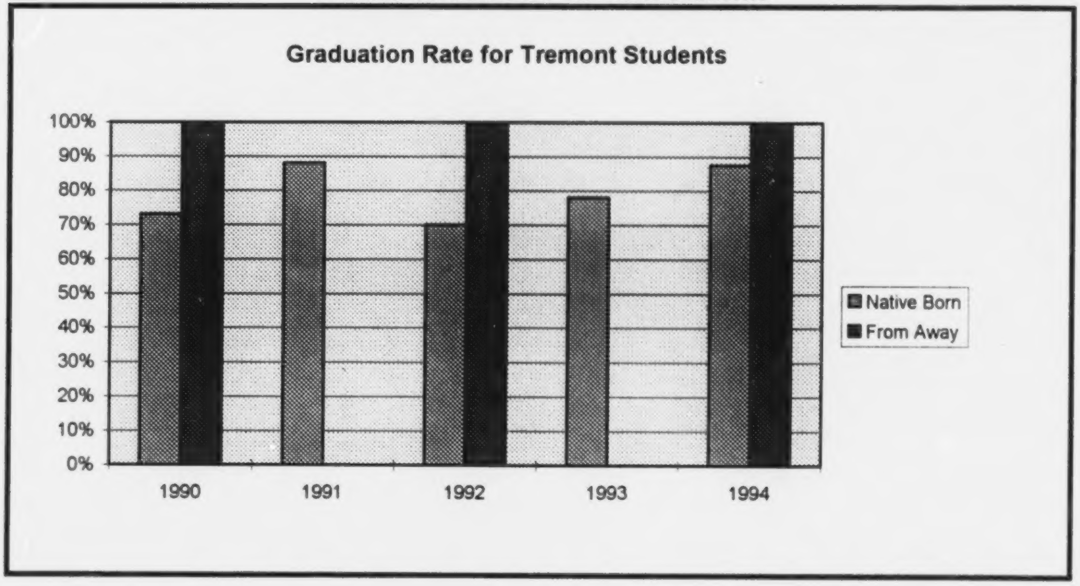
[108] Charles Murray, co-author or "The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life."

[109] Lawrence, Barbara Kent, "The Gap in Achievement: A Case Study of Mount Desert Island High School," October 5, 1995.

CHART FIVE
Graduation Rates for Tremont Students



A recent graduate now attending college in Boston adds that about half of the people in her eighth grade class went on to college after graduation. Of the five students who went to college, only the young woman I interviewed is the daughter of parents who did not go to college. However, her mother was very influenced by older women in her family who went to college:

> Well I had three grandmothers all living until I was in my thirties. Two of them played a big part in my life....I have a lot of great aunts, some who taught - actually all great aunts and grandmother taught. She lived across the road; I spent a lot of time with her, a lot more than with my mother. School was very important to my grandmother....I think she instilled education into me pretty early, my grandmother, she taught me everything, I think.

The influence of her grandmother and great-aunts enabled her to encourage her daughters to continue their education; she now has the one daughter in college and another about to graduate from high school who plans to attend college.

We see that when parents have been to college they value the experience and encourage their children to go to college or vocational school. The role of grandparents and other relatives of the older generation is very important, particularly since many of these people served in the

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military, or in wartime industries, and seem to have a broader understanding of the value of post-secondary education than their own children and grandchildren.

Some high school students value traditional ways of doing things and find it difficult and uncomfortable adapting to different values and behaviors than ones they are familiar with.

> B: James, what did you do when you got out of high school?
>
> James: I was planning to go to college, planning to go to UMM [University of Maine at Machias]. I got down there, didn't actually take any classes....I was there for a day and it just came to me that it wasn't where I wanted to be.
>
> B: Were there any things you remember that happened that made you think that?
>
> James: On the application for the college, I put down what you like to do, your hobbies, for a roommate. When I got there it was completely different from what I filled in and I ended up actually getting a junior for a roommate....
>
> Trina: He was a freshman.
>
> James. No - the roommate I got WAS NOT a freshman. [laughter]
>
> Trina: He was a freshman but he had just got out of the army so he was like 23 or 24.
>
> James: It didn't dawn on me that it was a good way to start out.
>
> Trina: You've got to include tastes and likes.
>
> B: I am sensing he was a little different.
>
> Trina: He was a real partier and he...
>
> James: It was just the opposite for what I put out for personality. It just came that it wasn't what I wanted to be doing.

Someone who had made a real commitment to getting a college education might have tried to change roommates or made some other accommodation in a difficult situation. However, his resolve did not outweigh his reluctance when he was faced with a difficult problem, and no one in his primary group tried to persuade him to stay.

Some young people express the feeling that they should go to college, either because their relatives have gone, because they think it is the way to get a better job, or because teachers and other adults have told them that they should. However, there seems to be insufficient internal motivation to override cultural and economic messages that make going to college difficult.

> Albert: When I transferred [to a private religious school], I still intended to go to school, and during my junior year I was thinking did I really want to do more of it and I was debating, and when James went to school for one day...
>
> James: Thirteen hours.
>
> Albert: I felt like I had to: she went, he went, he was going, my cousins all went, I felt like I had to.
>
> James: He was the next in order.
>
> Albert: My cousins - it wouldn't be right. I was the oldest on this side, everyone else is doing it, I have to go, it's not right. When he went for a day and came back, I got thinking if he doesn't have to why do I have to, why do I have to go? You know, it wasn't at that point a want, at the end of my junior year it was I have to, and I had picked my grades back up. I was going to go, and at the beginning of my senior year he is working at the time, making money, what I thought was making money, and I thought, I don't have to go to school to make money, and I still was going to go and John offered me a job, and I said, I'll take a year off, my grades aren't great anyway. I did well on the SATs. So I'll take a year off, I'll build some money up. Once I started working, living at home, I thought again, making a lot of money, so I just stayed with it. By the time I thought I might want to go back, it was too late to go back. I had met a girl, and it was too late to go back anyway, so now I wish I had gone. I do wish I had gone.
>
> B: For what reason?
>
> Albert: Plumbing isn't always the funnest profession in the world; it isn't always enjoyable. If you had to work anywhere this is definitely it, but there is other things I would have rather done....Do I want to keep doing this for the next forty years of my life, do I want to go crawl under buildings...? Some of the guys. Do I want to be sixty-two and crawling under buildings? I don't think I want to, but that is where it would head, that is where it would stay.

Albert had changed his program from college to business after encountering difficulties in math, and with little consultation with his teacher, guidance counselor, or parents. Though some able students enter the high school intending to go to college, many lose their ambition due to a combination of factors and change from the college to the business program, often with little or no advice from older people. We see the power of the primary group at work when Albert made a decision based on what his cousin James had done.

Migration of young people to find jobs, long a tradition in Maine as we have seen, does not draw so many out-of-state now. Local residents believe fewer people migrate out of the area today than they used to. The Postmistress says, "Most of them are staying, some leave, but not so many, and over the years they come back. I was thinking about that last night, I was thinking about some of the kids." And an older resident states, "Actually, I don't think it is as much as it used to be, not as many people leaving. Actually the island is getting tough though for young people to build on, then they go to Trenton or Ellsworth, but they still come back to the island."

Summary

Interviewees discussed many factors that influence students in their decisions about whether or not to continue their education past high school graduation. Although lack of money is important, John and Shirley's success in sending five children to college or post-secondary vocational school on a meager budget shows us that powerful motivation can overcome the difficulties of sending a child to college. Connections to the primary group including members of the extended family are another important factor - and surprisingly, grandparents may be more likely to encourage grandchildren to continue their education than the parents because of the education they received serving in World War II. Availability of jobs, particularly in family-owned businesses, is critical, and the fact that many local jobs do not require advanced education is a disincentive to students to invest in enormously expensive college or vocational training.

The gap between the success of Tremont students in elementary school and the rate at which they go on to college is in part explained by such traditions and realities and in part by their experience in the high school. If their parents don't encourage them and show them how college may be possible for them, some able Tremont students lose momentum in their sophomore or junior year and switch from the college to business track. Students who are not in extracurricular activities may drift to activities that are less wholesome and scuttle their chances of continuing past high school, or even of graduating. The extraordinary nurturing students receive in Tremont does not, in some ways, serve them well in the socially competitive atmosphere of the high school, where they may feel inferior and see only a future of limited options.

Proponents of post-secondary education have stressed the practical aspect of education for getting a job. But emphasizing the practical purpose of an education is counter-productive in areas where the local economy does not produce many jobs that require such investment. Linking the need to get an education with getting a job diminishes the rationale for schooling and education, and narrows the vision of those who do go on to post-secondary schooling as well as those who don't, for example, the interviewees who decried the need to learn French if one were a business major.[110] What is really needed is a more broad-based education that could give new insights and enlarge a vision of what is possible.

Many people who have moved to Maine have advanced degrees (both a broad and a narrow education) that help them secure existing jobs or create new ones. As Richard Sherwood has demonstrated, highly educated newcomers often get jobs that pay well and are even, in fact, paid more with similar qualifications for similar work than are Maine natives. This negates the premise that a well-educated person has to leave Maine to get a good job, or that there is no justification for students from Tremont to go to college or vocational school after graduation from high school.

The intertwining of schooling and the economy produces a spiral effect that works either negatively or positively to reinforce one against the other. In Maine there is a long-standing reluctance in some areas to invest in post-secondary education. Curiously, this does not seem to be felt evenly, even within communities that are similar and proximate. Investment in education may be precipitated by the belief that there are few local options for employment, but conversely, the decision not to go on to post-secondary education may be based on the assumption that traditional occupations, such as caretaking and fishing, will be available for high school graduates.

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[110] '*Educare*:" The Latin word from which "educate" is derived, means "to lead out." Does it also suggest that if we are led out of ourselves by becoming educated, we may learn to lead?

Many patterns have developed as families and communities react to their culture and history; however, some of these patterns seem maladapted to the requirements of the present.

CHAPTER TEN

Conclusions

As I come to the end of this study, I understand a little more fully what it is like to grow up and be educated in the late 1990s in a rural Maine village on an island that attracts millions of visitors each year. This is such a particular world that it is hard at first to see how my understanding of it can apply elsewhere. However, I think there are things to learn from Tremont about what makes a school a nurturing environment, why students from small rural towns encounter difficulties in making the transition to a larger regional high school, and how the accidents of time and place mold our minds and character.

The question is: What is the influence of culture on the aspirations of students in Tremont, Maine? The answer is complex. The Town of Tremont, the least populated and most isolated of the four towns on Mount Desert Island, has the highest percentage of native-born people, the least ethnic diversity, and the lowest per capita income. Tremont is more traditional than the other island towns and gives us a clearer picture of Maine culture than towns which have a higher percentage of summer visitors or residents from out-of-state. Tremont displays many of the characteristics that have made Maine a place where children get a fine elementary school education but do not go on to post-secondary education in the numbers one would expect given their stellar performance on state and national tests.

As in Tremont, many factors in Maine's history and geographic location contribute to the character of the state today. Physically isolated, Maine has also been socially isolated. Its population is still surprisingly homogeneous (98.35% white) and stable, although in the past two decades there has been considerable migration into the state. The culture that developed in a frontier society, attracting certain types of people, still values self-reliance, being out-of-doors, working with one's hands, pragmatism, loyalty to family and community, and independence.[111]

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[111] I remind the reader of the high percentage of people in Tremont who are self-employed.

Maine's people have perhaps been the primary export of a poor state in which other natural resources are limited. Valued for their strong work ethic and pragmatism, Mainers have found employment throughout the United States. Over time, migrating from Maine to find work in other states became an acceptable way to make a life and career - a safety valve for young people looking for jobs, but also a source of anxiety for families afraid of losing them. This pattern has had enormous consequence, even shaping the University of Maine system, which draws one of the smallest percentage of high school graduates to its programs of any system of public education in the country. I think the low "yield" reflects an attitude towards post-secondary education that is part of the culture of Maine and has undermined the state's commitment to post-secondary education for its citizens.

Other traits in the traditional culture: passivity, fatalism, and a sense of victimization crush the incentive students have for further education. Economic obstacles further block the path for those who think they are unable to climb over, around, or through such barricades. Furthermore, the availability of jobs in fishing, the tourist industry, boat-building, and serving summer residents, particularly along the coast, makes post-secondary education seem a poor investment for students and their families. Not only do families face high tuitions, they must defer income and, if they own a business, lose the immediate benefits of having a son or daughter working with them. Finally, the feeling of "being a hick," being second-rate, makes it very difficult for some students to envision themselves as highly educated professionals, which makes it almost impossible for them to work towards that goal.

We must look to the history of Maine to understand where the feeling of being second-rate or "hicks" may have come from because it was not always so powerful. Before the Civil War, Maine had a thriving economy based on limited natural resources combined with the hard work and inventiveness of its people. Devastated by the Civil War, as we have seen, coastal Maine revived its economy by selling itself to tourists and summer residents, which transformed the production based economy into one based on service. The work of local year-round people is underpaid in relation to the resources of the employers, but the educational system continuously replicates the supply of people willing to serve the summer community as waitresses, cooks, maids, and caretakers. Some local people characterize the relationship between the year-round and summer communities as "feudal."[112]

In many ways, of course, coastal Maine is extraordinarily fortunate to have had anything to sell. Other areas of the state and country have not been able to attract large numbers of paying guests and have suffered depopulation and almost depression level decline. However, there is a "hidden injury"[113] in moving to a service based economy, particularly if the service is to large numbers of extraordinarily affluent, and often demanding and condescending, summer visitors. Part of the cost is in devaluing one's own culture for the materially "successful" culture of visitors and in-migrants and in damaging the collective self-esteem and self-worth. The Gilded Age in Bar Harbor may have tarnished, but it led to development of Bar Harbor as a major tourist area and Acadia as the second most visited national park in the United States. Protection of the extraordinary beauty of the island has made Mount Desert Island even more attractive to affluent summer residents, which in turn has led to another Gilded Age, particularly in the Town of Mount Desert, and to escalating property values throughout the island.

The rich are obviously not dominating local culture by physical force, but by the impact of their pocketbooks, social standing, education, and training on island people. Mainers perceive of themselves as "hicks," ill-educated people who don't know much. Sometimes they use this in "wicked" fun, a dodge to hide behind when actually cutting a summer person down to more manageable size; however, deep pessimism in the culture makes people think outsiders are more knowledgeable and fit for leadership, the same people Andre Gunder Frank "called 'lumpen bourgeoisie' and regarded...as major instruments of the dependency relationship" (Fagerlind, 1989:23). On Mount Desert Island we see their pervasive influence undercutting the conviction of local people in the value of their own culture. We see class distinctions deepening their feelings of dependence, victimization, and fatalism. In Tremont, on the western side of Mount Desert, where there are fewer tourists and summer residents, native-born residents express less overt antagonism to "summer people" than do native-born residents in the other towns (perhaps because they have fewer outsiders to contend with). However, as "backsiders," people from Tremont have felt inferior to people on the eastern side of the island, becoming the "hicks of the hicks." The accidents of history and location have led to cultural insularity and a sense of inferiority in relation to people from other parts of the country. People "from away" are amazed when they learn that Maine children are number one in Math and Reading on the NAEP's,[114] but unfortunately Maine people seem even more shocked that their children could fare so well on a national test.

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[112] One man who is the son of a caretaker and a is himself successful small business owner, after calling the relationship "feudal," added that wealthy families could often be generous in giving free housing, medical care, or even tuition to very promising offspring of their caretakers, but they did this in the form of handouts, largesse distributed at whim. Though this is the style of the affluent, it is still very different than paying people adequately and carried with it the stain of a hand-out rather than money earned through hard work.

[113] I refer again to Richard Sennett's "The Hidden Injuries of Class."

Development of the Self

Children in Tremont hear many messages. These are not identical among families, but, excluding real dysfunction and deviance, children learn that they are important and that their school and schooling is important. They learn to value their family and community, their way of life, and the peace and safety that surrounds them on the island. They learn that it is important to work hard in school and that they are expected to finish high school.

But children also learn that they are poor and unsophisticated relative to the more affluent people in the other towns and people who come "from away." They learn that they are from Tremont on the "backside" of the island, a town that cannot offer them the amenities of the larger towns or the facilities that students in other towns take for granted. They learn that opportunities in the local job market are limited, and that to have a "career" they must have a college education and move away from family, friends, and home. Increasingly, they see that unless they are given land or a house by their family they will have difficulty staying on the island. They learn that there is little they can or should do to change their "fate" and that "getting ahead" may anger family, friends, and neighbors. They learn that many things they have come to value as what make life good are not what the larger society values.

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[114] On the 1996 NAEP in Science, "Maine, Montana, and North Dakota had the highest percentage of students reaching the proficient level..." (Ed. Week, Oct. 29, 1997:14).

Through interaction with parents, grandparents, and other kin, and with members of the community and school, children internalize a surprisingly concerted system of values and traits. Again, there are exceptions. It is a limit of this study that I looked primarily at people who are not the exceptions, those who have done well in school and who had the opportunity to go to college or post-secondary vocational school. However, I am struck by the concert there is between people who touch these children's lives about the importance of children and their schooling.

Children growing up in Tremont develop a sense of self in relation to their immediate environment, their nuclear family, as well as their extended family, community, school, the larger island community, Maine, and of course, the national and international environment. They are most firmly imprinted by the closer associations of their primary group: family, community, and school and develop their perceived self, ideal self, and real self in relationship to these influences.

As stated earlier, there is consistency in the messages most elementary school children hear from their families, community and school: they are valued; they need to work hard throughout high school; they have ability and need to compensate through hard work for the more limited opportunities in Tremont. Although, of course, children are aware of differences in family income and status while growing up in Tremont, their perceptions of self begin to separate when they go to the high school and are divided into college, business, or vocational programs.

In high school, increased exposure to national media and island peer culture brings students into contact with different values and mores that contradict and de-value the ones they have internalized as children. Contradictions that may have been hidden by distance become apparent. For example, at Tremont School students are encouraged to go to college or vocational school. When they are at high school they face the reality of expensive tuitions, diminishing support from family and teachers, and competing values luring them into other activities.

Differences between the culture of grammar school and high school, of traditional culture and contemporary culture (*Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft)*, as well as the realities of finding local employment, begin to create tension between what some students see as their ideal self, which may be a person who has a college education, home, family, career, and good income, and what they begin to see as their real self, which faces more limited possibilities.[115] That the real self faces more limited possibilities than the ideal self is, of course, a universal challenge, not a problem unique to students from Tremont. However in Tremont, the limitations some students face seem in large part to come from the perception of barriers rather than actual barriers. Obviously not all students will be intellectually capable of going on to post-secondary education; however, the question of this study is why, in a state in which children score so high on the national tests, do so few then go on to post-secondary education?[116]

Part of the tension of growing up anywhere is in bringing the ideal self and real self into alignment. The irony for students from Tremont is that they have been so nurtured and successful throughout grammar school that their promise seems limitless. That promise is dulled by attitude, values, mores, and habits of mind inculcated by the history and culture of Maine that unintentionally conspire to make post-secondary education seem, for some students, too expensive, difficult, unrewarding, and irrelevant or contrary to the values of the culture.

Students at Tremont School are supported by family, school, and community and taught values such as respect for elders and traditions, love of family, love of the land, and love of hard work. They are given opportunity to work hard at academic and extra-curricular activities and are encouraged to participate fully in the school. However, the ideal images they build of themselves and their abilities do not match the reality of the high school or the job market they enter upon leaving the high school. As support of their family and community dwindles, and if they fail to establish strong roots in their new school through involvement in extra-curricular activities, the promise fades and they settle into a diminished reality, a reality that becomes acceptable because it is consonant with the values and ways of living of so many people they know.

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[115] Samantha and Albert, who left the college program in the middle of high school, are examples of such students, as are the many others referred to by teachers and friends I have interviewed as having lowered their sights to deal what was possible or "real."

[116] For example, a brother and his younger sister talked at length about the ways in which they diminished their expectations of themselves in the face of opportunities in a family owned business and about the goal they had until about the end of their sophomore years of going to college.

The concept of cognitive dissonance helps explain how an individual copes with change in his or her social, physical, and psychological environment. Students in Tremont experience cognitive dissonance both when they go from the elementary school to the high school and when they consider their prospects beyond high school. These transitions are, of course, different for all students, but cognitive dissonance helps us understand why some are under great pressure and why some even experience serious depression.[117]

Students who come from low risk backgrounds, those who have a clear sense of purpose, those who are involved in school activities, and those whose parents support their efforts to go to college, will find consonance at the high school. They will be able to pursue a course of studies and extra-curricular activities at the high school that enable most of them to go to colleges or vocational schools considered acceptable to other members of their group.

However, students who are in a "high risk" group will not find consonance between their aspirations to post-secondary education and the realities they face. These students will encounter dissonance between the values they learned from their elementary school teachers and the larger society (that one must have a post-secondary education in order to succeed today) and their perception of self as defined by their families and local culture. High risk students will have to deal with the cognitive dissonance they experience either by going against their families and local culture to pursue the goal of post-secondary education, or by giving up that ambition. If they give up, perhaps by moving from the college to business or vocational tracks, they will try to make this acceptable, either by minimizing the value of a college education, by maximizing the difficulties they face, or by trying to get approval for their decision from friends and family members.

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[117] As we saw earlier, Leon Festinger's concept of "cognitive dissonance" is the impetus for integrating alien patterns of thinking, being, and doing into a framework, either psychological on the individual level, or cultural on the societal level. On a cultural level we would call this process of integration "acculturation," knowing it can also lead to cultural disintegration.

High risk students will find support from friends and some family members for changing their goals and are unlikely to go to teachers or guidance counselors, both because those people are busy and haven't established close relationships with them, and because they are less likely to support this decision. Students will go to friends, who are often looking for affirmation that they are doing the right thing in withdrawing from more demanding programs or even leaving school, and to parents, who don't always understand the value of a college education and fear what they think it means: that they or their child will incur a large debt, and that the child will have to leave home to find suitable work. The pressure of cognitive dissonance is simply too great for many students to bear alone and they diminish their aspirations to achieve a better cognitive fit.

Some Tremont students at the high school do very well academically, socially, and in extra-curricular activities. These tend to be students whose parents or grandparents went to college, or who had parents who were encouraged by family-members to go on to post-secondary education but for whom that dream was impossible at the time. These parents whose own desires for post-secondary education had been thwarted know the difficulties their children face and are almost relentless in their encouragement and support.

Students whose parents support them emotionally and financially to achieve the goal of going to college or vocational school are likely to fulfill that dream. Another way of stating this is that the primary group they find in high school supports the goal of post-secondary education. Other students succeed because they become very involved in extra-curricular activities at the high school and catch the attention of coaches and teachers. Some students have specific academic skills and interests that lead them to internships and summer jobs, or to mentors who encourage them to set their sights high. However, without such intervention, it is hard for students to continue towards the goal of post-secondary education because to do so requires that they turn against the culture that has nurtured them so well. If students entering high school do not develop a new primary group that supports post-secondary education (and loses members such as teachers from Tremont who have supported this goal) they may find it impossible to sustain their aspirations.

It is a strength of the elementary school and culture of Tremont that children are well supported and valued, but the transition to high school is difficult for many of them. With some students it seems as if the momentum they gather at Tremont Grammar School slows in high school and stalls by their sophomore or junior year. Without the strong support of parents, mentors, or advisors, these students from Tremont lose their incentive to high aspirations because they have never fully internalized the desire to go to college or vocational school, because the realities of the environment they face after leaving the high school seem too discouraging, and because the messages of the local culture never really told them to go to college, just to do well through high school. It is as if the messages telling students to do well suddenly change and they are left without a clear sense of direction or support.

At Risk Students from Tremont

I have identified categories of students least likely to succeed in going on to post-secondary education. Excepting students for whom family dysfunction is a crippling problem, I see the following students as unlikely to continue their schooling:

Those:

- who do not participate in extra-curricular activities.
- whose parents did not go on to post-secondary education and who do not support them in the aspiration to continue their schooling.
- whose parents believe that "what was good enough for my father is good enough for my son."
- whose parents (or other relatives) offer them a secure job in a family owned business.

- who do not have the support of a mentor or other significant adult who helps them value post-secondary education.
- who are very close to their families and do not want to leave the area.
- who see no future opportunities that require post-secondary education.
- who value a liberal arts education only as a means to secure employment
- whose parents may have attended college or post-secondary vocational school but paid their own tuition at a time when tuition was not such an enormous investment and have not planned, or do not plan, to pay for their children's further education.
- with little resilience or determination, and no internalized goals or investment in further education.
- who have had secure jobs in family-owned businesses and little experience in other types of work.

Conclusion

"It is a poor sort of memory that only works backwards." Memory, collective and individual, works forwards too. What we have seen focuses the lens through which we will see, and what we have learned helps define what we will learn. The extraordinarily supportive and synchronous messages of the culture of Tremont promote success through elementary and high school, but are not so strongly supportive of post-secondary education. In fact, many of the deepest values of the culture go against the aspiration to post-secondary education. The collective memory of Tremont, in looking forward, does not tell its children that it is important, or even possible, for them to set challenging academic aspirations for themselves. Many students who pursue further education must flout local culture and defy local traditions.

Some patterns that worked in the past are no longer valid and are perhaps even contrary to the best interests of children from Tremont and other rural communities. In the past, children may not have needed a post-secondary education in order to thrive, but neither did they face competition for jobs and housing from well-educated outsiders. There were few locally available professional jobs, and those that existed, such as minister, teacher, or doctor were highly prized because they allowed a person to stay near family and friends and be financially secure and well-respected. However, now there are many more professional jobs available, for instance at the Jackson Laboratory, College of the Atlantic, and Bar Harbor Hospital, which have all expanded in recent years, but few of these high-level, well-paying opportunities go to local people because they lack the necessary training and skills (The Bar Harbor Times, 1995-97).

The self-characterization that what was good enough for my grandparents is good enough for my children, or that Maine people are somehow not good enough to compete, seems curiously passive and fatalistic; it is surprising in a state that so values rugged individualism. Most importantly, these habits of mind are not going to protect the way of life many Maine people treasure. Now many people "from away," who were raised in a different tradition and have no such hobbles on their ambitions, are coming into the state. In areas like Mount Desert Island we see the conflict over property and membership on governing boards most acutely. In many ways Maine people are losing authority over, and ownership of, their own state.

The barriers that once protected Maine from invasion no longer exist. Maine can not rely on the ferocity of climate, hostilities with indigenous peoples, wars with neighbors, or sparse natural resources to keep people from coming to the state and competing for the best jobs and properties. In this age of instant communication, the state is forced to be part of the world, with all the good and bad it has to offer. Maine's children must now compete with people "from away" who, like the cottagers Edwin Godkin described in 1890 as "red squirrels" taking over the habitat of native gray squirrels, are taking over the homes of the native residents of Maine. Making a living, creating new jobs and opportunities in Maine, and protecting the way of life many Maine people treasure will take a different kind of schooling and a different kind of outlook on what is possible; it will require an investment both public and individual in the best post-secondary education we can offer.

There are great strengths in Maine culture and history. Using these we can strengthen the way our children will meet the challenge of growing up in Maine in the late 1990's. We can put collective memory to work in creating programs that incorporate enduring values to regain economic and social viability. Using the lasting strengths and virtues of hard-work, integrity, love of family, community, land, and a way of life, Maine people can be powerfully educated in academic and pragmatic skills, creating a strong economy and ensuring continuation of a treasured way of life - the way life should be.

EPILOGUE

Suggestions

The strength of a school is primarily its people, not its equipment or facilities. Though the newest computers, the best gymnasium, a science lab, and a fine library are important resources, and Tremont School would benefit by having them, the most important resource is the people who form the school: students, parents, teachers, staff, community members. And just as the strength of a school is in its people, so is the strength of a town or state.

I offer suggestions that build on the strengths of the people in Tremont. My recommendations to the Town of Tremont might apply to other towns, but not without a preliminary study of each town and school such as I have presented here of Tremont, and not, of course, unless people in those towns supported the program. Several principles guide my suggestions.

Working with Culture and Community

I have identified traits in the culture of Maine that both promote and retard interest in post-secondary education. It is vitally important to look at the history and culture of Maine, or of any other state, in designing a program for change, particularly one to change attitudes about education that affect so many people in a community. Local people must take an active part in designing these programs, as ideas imposed by outside experts are more likely to be ignored or subverted. Programs that grow from needs communities have identified are more likely to succeed and to be empowering; however, we must recognize that it takes time to build trust and lines of honest communication to identify real needs.

Many people, including teachers, administrators, parents, and children will feel threatened by change; however, people with a vested interest in the *status quo* may have a perspective and experience that should be heard. Change has not always brought the promised benefits;

sometimes those who are initially a drag on progress have contributed to final implementation by resisting half-thought-through initiatives. When people are scared by change, they act out of fear and are defensive. It is important to design programs for change that provide adequate support for people already working within the system so that they feel valued and can support the process.

By telling children and parents of a racial, ethnic, or cultural group that we expect less of them, we doom them to doing less, not only because we all have a tendency to do what is expected of us, but because competition is a stimulus to achievement. Being denied a chance to compete, for whatever reason, limits opportunity to develop skills. Howard and Hammond show us how this affects the academic work of some minority students:

> Competition spurs development. The willingness to engage in competitive activity with commitment to high standards and success stimulates the discipline and effort that underlie intellectual development..."getting over" or dropping out represents a retreat from competition, a lack of sharpness and resolve, and an obvious loss of focus on intellectual development. [Hammond and Howard, 1986:53]

We can apply this description to traditional Maine students, many of whom have been told they are intellectually inferior. If no one expects them to excel, they don't. To swim against the current of negative expectations is simply more than they can do, unless a person or event hauls them out of the water, or extraordinary intelligence buoys them up.

E.D. Hirsch suggests, "Intellectual capital [is] a civil right" (Hirsch, 1996:43), and Leon Festinger points out that individuals tend to conform to a group mean in social, physical, and intellectual behavior (Festinger, 1989). Linking these two concepts suggests that it is imperative in a democratic society to teach all children the "intellectual capital" they will need to succeed and to raise group expectations to maximize the benefit for all individuals in the group. In this investment in raising the tide so all the boats float at a higher level, we are investing in students, not only for themselves, but for their community, state and country.

In order to buttress students in their aspirations for post-secondary education, we must look for ways to attenuate the dissonance in their environment created by conflict between their individual goals and goals their culture condones. Dissonance is, of course, unsettling. However, the consonance that so supports Tremont students in their own environment also works against them when they have to negotiate the larger culture. We may wish that these students could stay insulated by a bubble of support - and if their world were not changing around them, they probably could. The economic pressures, however, created in part by the steady flow of highly educated and affluent people "from away" to the island, make this impossible. Tremont students must deal effectively with this changing environment if they are to preserve what they cherish about their way of life.

One way in which a community can devise strategies to deal with such issues is through the process of "action research." "Action research is a process whereby people can develop their own diagnosis and prescription, thereby acting out their self-interest and gaining a sense of power" (Palmer, 1974:6). Parker Palmer and Elden Jacobsen, who helped create the concept and process of action research, divided action research into stages in which a group of people representing all constituencies in a school identify a central issue, form a hypothesis to investigate, gather pertinent literature, design research instruments, collect and analyze data, and draw conclusions, as any researchers would do. "The difference between academic or scientific research and action research is that the people in the community participate fully from beginning to end" (Palmer, 1974:19). As they identify problems that are important to them and begin to understand the origins of those problems, they confront real obstacles blocking solutions. Working with a facilitator, they begin to understand that dividing into "us *vs.* them" diminishes resources and that only in partnership can they remove obstacles or redefine a path.

With these thoughts in mind, let us look at actions the community might consider to address conditions that impact the rate at which young people from Tremont go on to post-secondary education. My research uncovered the following issues and patterns:

- norms of the culture that dissuade students from going on to post-secondary education, including low self esteem and sense of efficacy for native-born students from Tremont
- difficulty in transition to the high school for "high risk" students
- difficulties Tremont students have at the high school
- weakening ties with members of a primary group that supports post-secondary education
- new primary groups that do not support post-secondary education
- no facilities in which Tremont's young teens can meet
- insufficient support for students in learning about post-secondary education and ways to finance higher education
- misconceptions about the job market in Tremont, Mount Desert Island, and Maine
- allure of local jobs not requiring higher education
- increasing problem of competing with people "from away" for jobs and housing

Programs to Address Cultural Factors that Influence Aspirations

Programs must address not only specific issues in the community but cultural traits that may make post-secondary education extremely difficult for some students. Let me summarize these traits and ways in which programs might help ameliorate their negative effects.

1. Fatalism:

> Fatalism is sometimes interpreted as a docility that is a trait of national character. Fatalism in the guise of docility is the fruit of an historical and sociological situation, not an essential characteristic of a people's behavior. It almost always is related to the power of destiny or fate or fortune - inevitable forces - or to a distorted view of God. Under the sway of magic and myth, the oppressed (especially the peasants, who are almost submerged in nature) see their suffering, the fruit of exploitation, as the will of God - as if God were the creator of this "organized disorder." [Freire, 1993:44]

Fatalism is an important barrier to aspiration and, as Freire shows us, is the product of "a sociological situation, not an essential characteristic of a people's behavior." This suggests that the anchor of fatalism can be cast off. If you believe that you violate a law of nature or of God by achieving beyond "your place" in society, how can you dare aspire to what is "above" you? But if you believe that all human beings have the right to change their circumstances, external realities have less power to hold people back than internalized habits of thinking. I am reminded of the words of the 'Serenity Prayer' which asks for the courage to change those things that can be changed, the patience to accept those things that cannot be changed, and the wisdom to know the difference. Some things cannot be changed, but ways of thinking about them can.[118]

In Tremont, it is critical that people from the community who are perceived as successful - however that is defined - are a part of the lives of the children. Creating a strong mentoring program at Tremont School by encouraging high school students, returning college students, and adult members of the community to become mentors and role models for students might help to attenuate the grip of fatalism. Creating an Action Research Team would be another powerful tool to counter the power of this myth. If adults can join together to identify a problem, research that problem, and then make changes, they will in the process learn that they can change their fate.

2. "If it was good enough for my grandfather..."

Although some grandparents, particularly those who have lived and worked outside the area, encourage their grandchildren to pursue higher education, many do not. The idea that what worked in the past will work for the present and future is a recurrent theme in the conversation of parents and grandparents, and can be an attempt to curtail change - perhaps a symptom of their own cognitive dissonance. An outreach to parents and grandparents that emphasizes the value of their knowledge and its application to today's world might deter them from counseling youngsters away from further education. Discussion groups led by a facilitator might begin to address some of these issues, but they are deeply held and will resist change. The facilitator could work with children and teachers to create curricula that honor the history of the area but help children and older relatives incorporate new skills. Homework projects that parents and children can do together are ideal for this purpose, as are activities in which several generations participate, such as interviewing, journal writing, and making videos or scrapbooks that celebrate family history.

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[118] "God, grant me the courage to change the things I can, the strength to accept the things I cannot change, and the wisdom to know the difference."

3. Growing Up Means Going Away:

The issues of maturing into adulthood are different for rural youth than they are for adolescents growing up in urban communities. Though the pattern of rural migration to cities has begun to change, still the mind-set of many Maine people is that their children will have to move away to get jobs that pay well. This myth becomes increasingly inaccurate as well-educated professionals succeed in the Maine economy.

We must show children and their parents and grandparents that becoming educated does not make moving away inevitable. It is critical that students understand they can learn sophisticated skills required to fill existing jobs as well as to create new jobs. To this end it is important to work with parents, particularly mothers, who feel threatened by the prospect that their children will become educated and move away

4. The Importance of Family and "Mumma":

The nuclear and extended family structure in Tremont is a great strength to work with. However, that same family system can discourage post-secondary education because it fears family members will be drawn away to find work. In particular, "Mumma," like her British counterpart "Mum," wields great influence. To counter cultural barriers to aspirations of Maine children, a program must focus on Maine parents, particularly Maine mothers that helps them understand their importance in their children's schooling after grammar school and ways in which they can be supportive of their children's aspirations to post-secondary education. I would make creating strategies to reach parents the highest priority, starting with parents of newborn babies.[119]

5. Reluctance to Assume Debt:

Maine people may be wise to avoid debt because generally they have few resources with which to pay it back. Prospective students in Tremont must be made more aware of the possibilities of low-interest loans, scholarships, and the importance of investing in higher education. Perhaps Maine should consider instituting a tax form check-off for donations to a state scholarship fund similar to the one that now supports environmental projects.

6. Fear of the Dominant Society, Feelings of Inferiority:

Freire states that

> Self-depreciation is another characteristic of the oppressed, which derives from their internalization of the opinion the oppressors hold of them. So often do they hear that they are good for nothing, know nothing and are incapable of learning anything--that they are sick, lazy, unproductive--that in the end they become convinced of their own unfitness. [Freire, 1993:45]

Raising students' self-esteem and dispelling their feelings of inferiority will take time and must be approached from many avenues. However, the teacher's attitudes towards his or her students is critical. One reason for the success of Tremont School appears to be that so many of the teachers are from the community. Like Donaldson's "intrepid" students they returned home, bringing skills to share, an understanding of the local culture, and an ability to value their students.[120] Teachers need to understand children will live up (or down) to expectations their teachers have for them. Davies reminds us that

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[119] Many of the specific strategies developed by IRE and The League of Schools Reaching Out such as "Boxes for Babes," would be effective.
[120] Donaldson, Gordon, "Growing Up Means Going Away," 1984.

> the mind-set of many urban teachers and administrators is that the causes of low achievement and academic failure in their schools lie primarily in the characteristics of the children and their families -- race, social class, poverty, "foreign" cultures, problems of crime, violence, and drugs....Changing this mind-set may be at the heart of any effort to seek academic success for all children. [Davies, 1990:11]

The negative mind-set of administrators and teachers is equally devastating to rural children who are discriminated against because of their culture. If teachers learn how to learn from their students, they will see the many strengths that have enabled people of less advantaged cultures to cope with adversity. There are incredible strengths of this culture, a culture that has made Maine products stand out in national and international markets for integrity of workmanship and design.

7. Lack of Critical Sense and Susceptibility to Rumor:

The most promising way to deal with the petty divisiveness created by insularity and lack of critical sense is through expanded communication. Rumor festers in a closed environment, and many people in Tremont point out that they no longer know other residents because so many new residents have moved into the town. Encouraging lines of communication within the community may increase a sense of credibility and trust.

8. Getting Ahead Means Taking Away, Reluctance to Achieve for Fear of Community Criticism:

This is a subtle but critical barrier to success. Action research projects would help enormously in dispelling these two barriers to education. Group and community projects might also help foster feelings of mutual support and success.

9. Pettiness, Small-Mindedness, Insularity:

These qualities can reinforce a culture by turning it in on itself, but they do not help people to look realistically at the present or future. We know that in the past Maine people traveled widely because they served on ships and in wars and many migrated to find work. We must look for new ways to expand both peoples' horizons and appreciation of their own community.

10) Reluctance to Think Abstractly or Develop Long-term Goals:

So many of the other barriers to education we see in Maine culture, like fatalism and feeling powerless, mitigate against making long-range goals, particularly for high achievement. If we can change these patterns, we may also change people's ability to think abstractly and engage in long-term projects. Action-Research, though it should start on small tasks so people are not daunted, may take on larger and more involved projects over time.

OTHER ISSUES:

Ownership of Real Property in Tremont

It is clear that patterns of ownership of real property on Mount Desert Island are changing dramatically. Like other resort areas that attract out-of-state residents, Mount Desert Island and Tremont are unlikely to lose their appeal in the foreseeable future. As the acreage available to year-round people diminishes, it is only within the scope of the Town, not of individuals, to preserve land for people who have been long-term residents. The Town may decide that this is undemocratic (and even unconstitutional); however, without intervention, it is increasingly difficult for year-round families to purchase or even keep property in the Town.[121]

It is critically important to initiate a discussion of this difficult topic to determine what, if anything, can be done through taxation, tax abatement, land-set aside requirements for subdivision, land reserves, or any other means, to redress the balance of ownership, now and for the future.

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[121] Although in 1990 77 percent of residents of Tremont owned their own homes, rising prices of real property make it both increasingly difficult for young families to buy property in Tremont and offer an incentive for owners to sell their property and move off the island.

Suggestions for Further Research

Mental Health:

I am concerned about my finding that a disproportionate number of freshmen at the high school experience symptoms of depression serious enough for them to consult health professionals. It is of utmost importance that this finding be researched and programs implemented to work with students who are so distressed.

Mid-Course Deflection:

I found a number of students who changed their course of study from college to business track with little consultation of parents or guidance counselors. Further research should be done to track students and determine if there really is a significant number who make these changes with little idea of the consequences. Creating the programs outlined above will help significantly in keeping students focused on work that they can do and in which they believe it worthwhile to invest their time and energies. However, it would be valuable to see if there is such a pattern and, if so, to look at the reasons students change their courses of study late in their sophomore or junior years.

Gender:

It would be fruitful to study issues of gender and reactions by sex to the aspirations survey.

Changing Patterns of Property Ownership:

Although I have used data recently collected by the assessors in three of the towns and can, with some assurance, state that patterns of property ownership are changing dramatically, further study of the implication of these changes is advisable.

Changing Patterns of Leadership:

It was not the province of this research to look at the changing patterns of leadership in the Town of Tremont or in the other island towns; however, earlier work I have done suggests that control of such bodies as the school boards, zoning boards, boards of selectmen, and advisory boards of charitable organizations are moving into the hands of people "from away." I am not implying that the consequences are positive or negative, but I do suggest that the eroding representation of native-born people on these boards will have, and has already had, effects on the education, property ownership, and other important elements of life in Tremont and the other island towns.

Changing Patterns of Education:

There is a hint of change in the survey results indicating that parents of younger children in Tremont are better educated than parents of older students. It would be useful to study this to determine if it is a trend and, if so, if the change reflects a higher number of people "from away" in the population of Tremont, and attempt to understand the implications.

University of Maine

I think the weak performance of the university system in Maine is both a symptom and a cause of the gap between success of Maine's students on the NAEP's and the low rate at which they go to college, particularly colleges of the University of Maine. Perhaps part of the reason the State University colleges draw so few Maine students is that too many students (like their parents) feel that "If you are any good you will get out of Maine." The unfortunate corollary to this notion is that if the most talented graduates are going to leave there is no point investing in a system to train them to take their talents elsewhere. This way of thinking, coupled with the feeling that college education is just for the "elite" and is anti-democratic, has undermined the state's commitment to its own universities.[122] It is essential to understand the cultural and historical factors that may influence policy about higher education in the state in order to make the university system as effective as possible.

Intervention: Creating A Community Centered Program

The phrase, "It takes a village to raise a child" has become so trite I hesitate to use it; however, the value of the concept can be seen easily in Tremont. In small traditional societies, help in raising children often comes from members of the extended family or other caring and experienced members of the community. One of the strengths in Tremont is these relationships; they are the primary source on which and with which to build.

As Joy Dryfoos has demonstrated, community schools can be loci for programs that extend from pre-natal care through adult education (Dryfoos, 1994). Many of the issues I have identified as constraints on the aspirations of young people from Tremont could be addressed in well-integrated programs offered at Tremont School and the adjacent community building which houses the Town Offices and gymnasium. Of the four island towns, only Tremont lacks such a Community Center with recreational and educational programs. One could argue that since Tremont is already doing such a fine job with elementary school children, adding a facility that the other towns, which are not as successful, already have does not make sense. However, the programs offered at Tremont Community Center should focus on ways to improve the rate at which young people from the town go on to post-secondary education; this may best be accomplished through educational, recreational and cultural programs offered to the entire community.

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[122] I remember Mrs. M.'s telling me that her friends were told to look out of state for college so they would not be a financial drag on Maine.

Mission of the Community Center

- to ease the transition of students from Tremont Grammar School to Mount Desert Island High School.
- to counter the "separation" some students experience during high school.
- to offer guidance and counseling for high school students from Tremont about issues they face at the high school, as well as in planning careers and post-secondary education.
- to reach out to parents and other family members to address cultural issues that impede support of post-secondary education.
- to augment the primary group for teenagers and adults alike with people who support such goals as post-secondary education and continuing school throughout adulthood.

The Community Center must incorporate the approaches outlined at the beginning of this Chapter, including action research. It must be headed by an experienced administrator and facilitator who has a thorough understanding of the community. The duties of this person would include the following:

- Supporting students by helping them develop academic and extra-curricular plans before they graduate from Tremont School and during their career at the high school.
- Meeting with high school students from Tremont on a regular basis to develop post-secondary plans.
- Researching availability of scholarships and supervising a computer-based college and vocational school placement program to help students identify and apply to college and vocational schools that meet their needs and interests.

- Being available to students and their parents to discuss the students' high school experience and intervene on their behalf, if necessary.
- Supervising after-school and weekend programs.

Programs offered at the Center:

- Mentoring

  Children benefit from close association with a caring and knowledgeable adult. Mentoring programs might be encouraged not only through advertising and making people aware of the importance of mentoring, but also through tax credits to individuals and businesses that support mentoring.

- Events

  Social, recreational, educational and cultural events such as assemblies, movies, and lectures might attract a wide-range of people if they were well-presented. Val Perkins, the Principal of Tremont School, has stated that grandparents and parents often call him during the summer to ask when school events will be held so they can plan ahead! He reports that families say they would much rather go to games and productions at the elementary school than the high school, even if they don't have children in the school, because it is part of the community. Perhaps the school can sponsor events that will increase peoples' awareness of the need for post-secondary education.

- Teen Center

  Students in Tremont complain that there is "nothing to do" and "no place to go." Although this is the cry of many young people, there is some reality to the concerns of teen-agers in Tremont because there is no place for them to "hang-out" in the town such as there are in the three other towns. Southwest Harbor has Harbor House, Bar Harbor has the YMCA, and in Northeast Harbor the Neighborhood House and the Northeast Harbor Cafe provide places for teen-agers to gather. Teenagers might not choose the Tremont School as the location for such a center, but having the opportunity to help create programs and influence decisions made about the way the center was used would probably overcome initial reluctance to participate.

It is extremely important that teen-agers in Tremont have a place to go that supports them and in which they can enjoy each other's company and spend time with caring adults, as well as become involved in positive, active, and fun activities. There is little space available; however, investment in our teen-agers is critical to the continuing strength of the community.

The following considerations may be useful.

a) Students be involved from the inception of the program to assure it meets their needs and has their support.

b) There be a place set aside for the use of teen-agers. This room could have a different use during the day and be reserved after school hours for teens.

c) There be a caring adult responsible for planning and co-coordinating who is working with the teenagers.

d) That the mini-bus run a regularly scheduled route to pick up and drop off teenagers.

e) That teens be encouraged to participate in some of the adult activities such as basketball games in the Men's and Women's Leagues.

- Intramural Programs and Activities Camp

Although there are a number of camps or activities for children available on Mount Desert Island during the summer, few of these are designed for young teen-agers. Many high school students have summer jobs; however, they might still enjoy recreational activities in the late afternoon and evening. After conducting a focus group or action research with a group of high school students to determine need, the Center might offer summer programs. In addition, members of the School Board from Tremont might encourage more intramural programs at the high school and the Tremont Community Center so that all students could be involved in physical activities.

- Realistic Preparation for the Demands of High School

Students mentioned that teachers at Tremont, in an attempt to prepare them, made them apprehensive about what they would encounter at the high school, both academically and socially. These students said they felt well-prepared academically but unnecessarily frightened by things their teachers at Tremont had said to them. However, they were less well prepared for dealing with social pressures at the high school. I recommend first that Tremont teachers consider that many of the Tremont students are able to take the challenging classes at the high school, and that they help students understand they are well-prepared academically but may be pressured by other students at the high school to engage in activities not conducive to academic success. In addition to helping eighth graders prepare an academic program, teachers at Tremont, particularly the eighth grade home room teacher, or an ombudsman, should help students consider the importance of extra-curricular activities and develop a program that keeps students involved in such programs during high school.

- High School Pre-season Camps

The high school should consider creating a one to two week day camp offering a variety of activities to be held prior to the start of the school year for all entering freshman. The existing sports camps provide an excellent way for students from the island to meet each other and develop new friendships. A day camp offering an introduction to drama, music, art, and sports programs at the high school for all freshmen might provide a way for them to get to know each other and become interested in pursuing positive activities at the high school. This would buffer them when they first enter the high school from association with older students who are not engaged in positive activities.

- Entrepreneurial Activities

Like Jonathan Sher, I think that entrepreneurialism can be taught because it is a habit of mind, a way of thinking, and the product of specific skills.[123] The Center should consider starting small business enterprises, similar to or in concert with Junior Achievement, planned and managed by elementary and high school students in conjunction with local colleges and businesses. For example, starting a school store, laundromat, daycare center, or furniture repair shop would give students first-hand experience in running a business. Classes in researching needs, designing products to meet those needs, and marketing these products have been successful at schools like Mount Desert Island High School and should be introduced at the elementary school level with the specific goal of encouraging entrepreneurialism.

In a previous paper, I outlined an outreach program that addresses this issue using the considerable talents and resources of people who summer in this community, in-migrants, and successful local entrepreneurs to help create new businesses by mentoring, investing, and providing support of their larger companies and organizations, as well as offering internships to students.[124] Students would work to identify, research, and create a practical solution to a problem faced by people at work. They would present their solutions and have a chance to visit sponsoring corporations to see how similar issues are handled.

- Job Counseling and Internships

The Center could encourage local businesses to employ area youth during the summer, train students in ways to find jobs, and provide role playing and other activities designed to help students in interviews, filling out applications, and so forth. Internships with local businesses would give students a chance to see how these businesses work and what skills they would need to find regular employment.

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[123] Sher, Jonathan, 1977.
[124] Lawrence, Barbara Kent, 1994 (b).

Programs for Adults:

The village school is the most important resource in most rural communities for supporting education and for encouraging post-secondary education. Sharing school facilities such as computer centers and libraries with the community would make these facilities more economical to run and give taxpayers a chance to take advantage of their investment. (For example, in many towns there are separate village and school libraries. Locating both in the same facility would increase the book collection for adults and students and bring people of different ages together.)[125]

The Center should offer daycare during program hours. The nursery might be a way for older students to learn skills in child-care and a source of revenue for the school. In addition, the Center could supervise a program of outreach to parents using trained local visitors to provide encouragement and expertise to expectant and new parents.[126] Programs should try to allay parents' fears about parenting, increase their interaction with their children, particularly in reading, and as a long-range goal, increase their support for post-secondary education. These programs should be available to all parents, not just those designated as "at-risk," because all parents are vulnerable and sometimes those who seem most in control are actually just putting up a good show and are quite needy underneath an impressive veneer.[127]

Programs for adults should be open to high school students and might include: tutoring for the GED, training in computer programs, learning languages from computer programs, as well as trips and presentations on a wide range of topics. It might be useful to have parenting discussion groups, not only for parents of newborns, but for all parents. These could be led by members of the community, such as nurses, social workers, experienced parents and grandparents.

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[125] Dr. Joy Dryfoos writes thoughtfully on the benefits of full-service schools.

[126] See Dr. Don Davies' discussions of specific techniques such as Boxes for Babes and Home Visiting.

[127] There are too many experts in child psychology who note that the first years of childhood are critical for child development for us to ignore the importance of investing in children at a very early age, ideally as close to conception as possible, and throughout their lives.

Justification for the Program

There are lessons to learn from recent immigrants to the United States about ways to encourage students to do better in school and raise their aspirations. Researchers have found that the extraordinary success of students in American schools who recently fled Indochina is due in large part to "Indochinese values that foster interdependence and a family-based orientation to achievement" (Caplan, 1992:20). The authors paint a vivid portrait of ways these families promote academic success.

> Nowhere is the family's commitment to accomplishments and education more evident than in time spent on homework. During high school, Indochinese students spend an average of three hours and ten minutes per day; in junior high an average of two and a half hours; and in grade school, and an average of two hours and five minutes....
>
> Among the refugee families, then, homework clearly dominates household activities during weeknights. Although the parents' lack of education and facility with English often prevents them from engaging in the content of the exercise, they set standards and goals for the evening and facilitate their children's studies by assuming responsibility for chores and other considerations.
>
> After dinner, the table is cleared, and homework begins. The older children, both male and female, help their younger siblings. Indeed, they seem to learn as much from teaching as from being taught. It is reasonable to suppose that a great amount of learning goes on at these times -- in terms of skills, habits, attitudes and expectations as well as the content of a subject. The younger children, in particular, are taught not only subject matter but how to learn. Such sibling involvement demonstrates how a large family can encourage and enhance academic success. [Caplan, 1992:18 -19]

An after-school program that brings parents and children to the school gymnasium at least once a week to do homework and socialize might help encourage high school students to continue the good work habits they learned at Tremont School. This community center would be a community substitute for the Indochinese dining room, a place to share and discuss goals and aspirations, strategies, methods, and attitudes. It is important that this take place in a community setting to sanction the discussion because parents need support from each other and members of the community in order to create and accept change. Parents may learn skills they can also use at home, particularly if they interact with other parents and a skilled facilitator.

One way to assess the cost of a program is to consider what will happen if it is not implemented. Unless the Town of Tremont takes a hard look at the issues I address here the cost may be high, measured in loss of motivated younger people who move away, less successful students who feel alienated, loss of the investment of time, money, and effort these people would make in the town, and loss of a feeling of community and way of life as more educated people "from away" move into the area. Working together as a community, there is enormous opportunity for neighbors to help each other and make the community thrive.

Staffing:

- There should be at least one paid staff person who takes primary responsibility for coordinating and organizing activities.
- Many of the leaders of small groups, chaperones, and presenters might be volunteers from the community. It might be possible, for instance, to ask participants in programs to give time themselves in another program to help offset costs. For example, a person in a class studying for the GED might help with nursery-care at another time.
- There should be a board of directors, which would include members of all the constituencies, particularly students, who might use the Center.

People staffing these centers would have to be volunteers, as there is little money to fund "extra programs." These tutors and mentors would be trained to help students plan for and apply to colleges or vocational schools.[128] The volunteers would meet on a regular basis with a professional teacher or guidance counselor.

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[128] In addition, there are computerized programs for college placement advisement and private College Placement Advisors, who, for a greatly reduced fee, will work with students using these programs.

Sources of Funding:

To launch such an ambitious program of change will take commitment of funds and energies. Let me suggest some guidelines to consider. The Center should be seen as an investment by the town in the people of the town, and therefore, the future of the town.

- The primary source of funding would be from the Town of Tremont.
- Grants and donations. A program for securing grants and donations must be implemented. The Tremont School Fund might also be used to support the Center.
- Fees. Participants might pay a minimal fee for participation in some, not all, activities.
- Fund-raisers for specific activities and supplies might also publicize events as well as increase interest in what the Center was providing.

I recognize that this is my agenda and that people of Tremont must adopt their own if it is to be implemented successfully. I offer my ideas and concerns only as suggestions in hopes they may be a useful first step.

APPENDIX I

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Construct Validity Evidence for the *Student Aspirations Survey*

Jonathan A. Plucker
University of Maine

The influence of students' affective development—especially student aspirations —upon academic and life achievement is gaining significant attention in the literature. However, psychometrically sound instruments that measure student aspirations and students perceptions of school climate characteristics that influence aspirations are not available for use by educators attempting to guide school reform efforts. The Student Aspirations Survey *was administered to 1,160 students in two rural middle and two rural high schools. Responses were subjected to confirmatory factor analysis, and results suggest that evidence of construct validity is considerable for student responses to the aspirations scales and very limited for student responses to the school climate scales (possibly due to the very high factor correlations). A small to moderate method effect may be present among student responses to the aspirations scales. Suggestions for improvement of score interpretation are provided.*

In the current era of educational reform, techniques and agendas for educational improvement are quite common. In particular, the influence of student affect upon student achievement and general well-being receives a significant amount of attention in the educational and psychological literature, certainly more than was present a decade or two ago (cf. Weiner, 1979; Weiner, 1994). Self-efficacy (Bandura, 1993; Schunk, 1985), or self-concept more generally (Marsh, 1990), stress (Fleming, 1981), and boredom/interest (Plucker & McIntire, 1996) are among the social and emotional topics that researchers attempt to link to student achievement and productivity. While this research is occasionally controversial (Kohn, 1994), the role of specific affective constructs such as student aspirations is generally acknowledged in achievement and motivation (Farmer, Wardrop, Anderson, & Risinger, 1995; Flint, 1992; Kirsch, 1986; Lewin, Dembo, Festinger, & Sears, 1944; Quaglia, 1989; Sewell & Hauser, 1975, 1976).

For example, researchers associate student aspirations with leadership skills (McCullough, Ashbridge, & Pegg, 1994; Robinson & Horne, 1993), psychological health and use of coping strategies (Payne & Peck, 1979; Snyder, 1995), high school and college attrition (Bickel, 1989; Bickel & Lange, 1995; Eckstrom, Goertz, Pollack, & Rock, 1986; Foster, 1975), educational attainment (Robertshaw & Wolfle, 1980), and adult income (Long, 1995). Available research suggests that significant educational and psychosocial benefits are associated with high levels of aspirations, and correspondingly, educational and psychological problems are associated with low levels of aspirations.

To aid schools in the development of programs that foster student aspirations, staff at the National Center for Student Aspirations (NCSA) designed an instrument to measure the student aspirations and student perception of school climate conditions that influence aspirations development. Based upon theoretical (Quaglia, 1989; Center for Research and Evaluation, 1994) and empirical studies (Plucker & Quaglia, in press), the resulting *Student Aspirations Survey* includes two scales that represent Aspirations (Ambition, Inspiration), two scales for student Self-description (Achievement Motivation, General Enjoyment of Life), and eight scales of school climate Conditions (Achievement, Belonging, Curiosity, Empowerment, Excitement, Mentoring, Risk-taking, and Self-confidence). The survey is intended for group administration, and the results of the survey are used by schools to assess their students' level of aspirations and perceptions of school climate conditions that impact this level of aspirations, which allows research-based interventions to be targeted appropriately on the aspirations-relevant aspects of school climate that students perceive in a relatively negative light.

Previous Research with the Student Aspirations Survey

In addition to the preliminary instrument development described by Plucker and Quaglia (in press), two measurement studies have been conducted with the *Student Aspirations Survey*. In the first, evidence suggested that the survey was a reliable measure of student aspirations and climate conditions, but evidence of construct validity via confirmatory factor analysis was not convincing (Plucker

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Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Jonathan A. Plucker, University of Maine, College of Education, 5766 Shibles Hall, Orono, ME 04469-5766. (plucker@maine.maine.edu)

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Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of Sample

Characteristic	Middle *n* = 203	High *n* = 403	High *n* = 279	Middle *n* = 275	Total Sample *N* = 1160
Sex					
female	48.2	51.8	57.2	46.2	51.2
male	51.8	48.2	42.8	53.8	48.8
Grade					
6	29.6			33.8	13.2
7	33.9			36.2	14.3
8	36.5		29.3	30.0	20.7
9		29.4	20.7		15.2
10		22.5	21.0		12.9
11		28.8	17.4		14.2
12		19.3	11.6		9.5
Mother's Education					
high school or less	61.6	46.4	50.4	36.0	47.5
college	38.4	53.6	49.6	64.0	52.5
Father's Education					
high school or less	68.7	44.8	52.6	44.7	50.7
college	31.3	55.2	47.4	55.3	49.3
Academic Ability					
below average	5.6	7.3	4.8	7.5	6.4
average	52.3	48.4	59.8	52.0	52.7
above average	42.1	44.3	35.4	40.5	40.9

& Quaglia, in press). In addition, a relatively large percentage of surveys contained missing data. In the second study, Plucker (1996) found evidence of discriminant validity when the survey was used with secondary students. Students with high scores on the Aspirations scales had higher scores on the Conditions scales than students who had low Aspirations scores. Given the results of these two studies, NCSA staff concluded that the survey was a promising instrument for the measure of student aspirations and school climate perceptions, but that the instrument needed to be revised and subjected to additional validity studies.

Method

The version of the *Student Aspirations Survey* used in this study consisted of 12 scales: two Aspirations scales, two Self-description scales, and eight Conditions scales. When responding to items which constituted the scales, students responded from strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (4). Based on the earlier measurement studies, researchers modified the previous version of the *Student Aspirations Survey* by combining two of the Aspirations scales into one scale, reverse-coding additional items to remove any positive response bias, and removing items determined via exploratory analyses to be problematic with respect to reliability and construct validity. These revisions reduced the length of the survey from 98 items comprising 13 scales to 89 items comprising 12 scales.

Sample

The survey was distributed to the student bodies at two high schools and two middle schools which draw students from 19 towns in rural areas of Maine. The average number of residents (1,264) in the 19 towns from which students were drawn is considerably smaller than the average number of residents per town statewide (2,457), but the median household income in the 19 towns (30,388) was similar to the state median household income (28,061). In addition, the towns' other financial and economic characteristics (e.g., tax rate, tax burden) were similar to state

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics for SDQ-II Scales[a]

Scale	Mean[b]	*SD*	Kurt[c]	Skew[d]	*n*
Aspirations					
Inspiration	2.63	.51	-.14	.16	1102
Ambition	1.76	.50	.60	.61	1079
Self-perceptions					
Ach. motivation	1.96	.50	.83	.30	950
Gen. enjoyment	2.34	.56	.22	.28	1002
Conditions					
Achievement	2.09	.47	.70	.31	1007
Belonging	2.26	.48	1.03	.56	978
Curiosity	2.12	.45	1.78	.42	986
Empowerment	2.39	.56	.41	.47	1065
Excitement	2.45	.57	-.18	.28	992
Mentoring	2.26	.51	.64	.41	990
Risk-taking	2.23	.45	1.04	.39	947
Self-confidence	2.14	.48	.54	.33	945

Note. Scale scores reported as averages by dividing item sum by number of items.
[a] SE = standard error; Kurt = kurtosis; Skew = skewness
[b] SE mean = .02
[c] SE kurtosis = .16
[d] SE skewness = .08

averages and relatively homogeneous among the 19 towns. Detailed demographic profiles of students in each school and for the total sample ($N = 1{,}160$) indicate that the sample was roughly gender and grade balanced (Table 1). In addition to median household income, other indicators of socioeconomic status (i.e., parents' educational attainment) suggest that the sample is drawn from a middle class population. Students also reported their perceived ability level, and a majority felt themselves to be average or above average. This tendency for inflated self-perception is consistent with previous aspirations research (Plucker, 1996).

Data Analysis

Two sets of confirmatory factor analyses allowed evidence of construct validity to be gathered. In order to facilitate interpretability of student scores, items were averaged within scales. For example, a scale consisting of eight items was scored by adding the items and then dividing by eight. This negated the impact of the varying number of items per scale when making inter-scale comparisons. This conversion created a scale ranging from 1 (high) to 4 (low).

Results

Descriptive statistics for the students' scores appear in Table 2. Means and distributions for the scores are very similar to those reported for the previous version of the survey (Plucker & Quaglia, in press), with relatively positive Ambition, Self-description, and school Condition perception, and generally neutral Inspiration. In contrast to data collected with the previous version of the instrument, student responses contained much less missing data.

Reliability

Values for Cronbach's alpha ranged from .64 for scores on the Risk-taking scale to .75 for scores on Curiosity. The average alpha for the Conditions scales was .72, and the average alpha for the Aspirations and Self-description scales was .71. Although evidence suggests that the instrument is sufficiently reliable for group and research uses, the results are less impressive than those associated with the previous version of the instrument (alpha values ranging from .69 to .84 with a mean of .78). However, given that most scales were shortened by at least one item, the reduced evidence of internal consistency is not surprising.

Table 3
Goodness of Fit Indicators for Tested Models

Model	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	RMR	TLI
Aspirations and Self-perceptions Models					
Independence	7071.43	231	30.61	.147	.000
One factor	2342.10	209	11.21	.046	.655
Two factors, correlated (*r* = .763)	2044.41	208	9.83	.046	.702
Four factors, correlated	1706.53	203	8.41	.040	.750
Five factors, correlated	961.04	199	4.83	.033	.871
Five factors, complex, corr.	742.24	193	3.85	.027	.904
Conditions Models					
Independence	21760.69	1176	11.69	.161	.000
One factor	6133.95	1127	5.44	.034	.746
Eight factors, uncorr.	13170.76	1127	11.69	.151	.389
Eight factors, 1 higher order	5932.85	1120	5.30	.034	.755
2 factors, correlated (*r* = .963)	6092.50	1126	5.44	.034	.748
3 factors, correlated	6085.01	1124	5.41	.034	.748

Note. Correlation matrices, means, and standard deviations are available from the author. As the fit of the tested conditions models was generally quite poor, parameter estimates and standard errors are not provided and are also available from the author.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

In an attempt to gather evidence of construct validity, the author used confirmatory factor analysis to fit various factor models to the data. Student responses were divided into two categories, the first including responses to items on the Aspirations and Self-Description scales (22 items) and the second including responses on the Conditions scales (49 items). Results of the various models are included in Table 3.

Aspirations and self-description scales. Several models were fit to the data for the four Aspirations and Self-description scales (i.e., Ambition, Inspiration, Enjoyment of Life, Achievement Motivation). In the first, items from all four scales loaded onto one general factor, resulting in a model with poor fit to the data. The second model allowed items from the Ambition and Inspiration scales to load onto one factor and the items from Enjoyment of Life and Achievement Motivation to load onto a second factor. This model also did not fit the data well, with a correlation between the two factors of .76. The third model included a separate factor for each set of items (i.e., the hypothesized model). Fit indices suggest that the model had an improved fit relative to the previous models but still did not fit the data well. After inspecting modification indices and exploratory factor analysis output, a fourth model was created in which three items, 15, 20, and 25, formed a fifth factor. This five factor model was associated with a significant improvement in fit, although standard benchmarks for model quality (i.e., TLI > .90) still had yet to be attained. After reanalysis of factor loadings, the five factor model was modified to include secondary loadings for Items 20, 78, 81, and 83. This model produced relatively good fit statistics, and corresponding loadings and factor correla-

Table 4
Factor Loadings and Correlations for Five Factor Model of Aspirations Scales

Variable	Item	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	SMC[a]
Ambition1	15					.78	.61
Ambition2	17	.47					.22
Ambition3	18	.65					.42
Ambition4	23	.65					.43
Ambition5	24	.71					.50
Ambition6	25					.84	.71
Inspiration1	14		.71				.51
Inspiration2	16				.44		.19
Inspiration3	19		.56				.31
Inspiration4	20		.33			.44	.48
Inspiration5	21				.57		.32
Inspiration6	22		.65				.42
AchMot1	77			.53			.28
AchMot2	80			.64			.41
AchMot3	81	.43			.25		.35
AchMot4	83	.16			.21	.12	.16
AchMot5	84			.49			.24
Enjoy1	75				.75		.57
Enjoy2	76				.72		.52
Enjoy3	78	.06		.30	.32		.35
Enjoy4	79			.56			.31
Enjoy5	82			.48			.23

Correlations					
Factor 1	1.00				
Factor 2	.36	1.00			
Factor 3	.69	.49	1.00		
Factor 4	.44	.64	.62	1.00	
Factor 5	.50	.58	.50	.42	1.00

Note. Omitted loadings and correlations constrained to equal zero. All loadings statistically significant (i.e., $p < .01$) except for loading of Item 78 (Enjoy3) on Factor 1.
[a]SMC = Squared Multiple Correlation

tions are included in Table 4. All loadings are significant with the exception of the loading of Item 78 upon Factor One.

Based on the fifth Aspirations model, the 22 items from the four scales were reorganized as shown in Table 5. Measures of internal consistency were similar to those for the four hypothesized scales. The fifth factor includes items that represent student awareness of the importance of education and had a Cronbach's alpha value of .79. Since this scale has only three items, the relatively large alpha value is impressive. The remaining scales appear to represent Ambition, School Achievement Inspiration, Life Achievement Motivation (or General Life Inspiration), and Enjoyment in School and Life. The reorganization of scales suggests that students are not differentiating enjoyment in school from enjoyment in life but are making a distinction between school and life inspiration and also between ambition and the importance of schooling.

Conditions scales. The author achieved much less satisfying results when he subjected the Conditions data to

Table 5
Interpretation of Five Factor, Correlated, Complex Aspirations Model Scales

Item	Item Text
Ambition (alpha = .73)	
17	I give little thought to my future.
18	I am looking forward to a successful career.
23	I have high goals and expectations for myself.
24	I don't expect very much of myself in the future.
81	I never make plans or set goals for myself.
School Inspiration (alpha = .71, w/o Item 20 alpha = .67)	
14	Most of the things I do in school I find enjoyable.
19	When I'm at school, time seems to fly by.
(20)	School is important to my life on a regular basis.
22	I find excitement in almost every class I attend.
Achievement Motivation (alpha = .72, w/o Item 78 alpha = .68)	
77	I like to be very good at what I do.
80	I feel I can do just about anything if I put my mind to it.
84	I can be very disciplined and push myself.
79	I am not interested in very many things.
82	I am often in a good mood.
(78)	I don't seem to succeed no matter what I do.
Enjoyment in School and Life (alpha = .75, w/o Item 78 alpha = .72)	
16	School causes a great deal of stress for me.
21	I find it hard to concentrate in classes.
75	I usually feel tired and bored.
76	I often have trouble getting motivated to do things.
(78)	I don't seem to succeed no matter what I do.
Importance of Schooling to the Future (alpha = .79, w/o Item 20 alpha = .80)	
15	What I learn in school will benefit my future.
25	Most of the things I learn in school are important to my future.
(20)	School is important to my life on a regular basis.

Note. Italicized items are reverse scored. Items enclosed in parentheses (i.e., Items 20 and 78) have similar loadings on two factors and are included in both factors.

confirmatory factor analysis. One factor and hypothesized eight factor models fit the data poorly, with factor correlations in the latter case in excess of .90. A variety of two and three factor models also fit the data poorly, again with very large factor correlations (fit indices for the best fitting two and three factor models are included in Table 3).

Second thoughts on the Aspirations scales. After reviewing the results of the Aspirations scales analyses, the tendency for reverse-scored and nonreverse-scored items to cluster together was noted. A sixth Aspirations model was created in which two additional factors—Positively Worded and Negatively Worded—accounted for a possible method effect in the Achievement Motivation and Enjoyment scales. The fit statistics for this model are a slight improvement over previous models ($\chi^2[186] = 657.63$, $\chi^2/df = 3.54$, RMR = .027, TLI = .914) but the differences lack practical significance. In an attempt to account for a method effect more comprehensively, three additional models were fit to the Aspirations data. In the first, removal of nonsignificant and low factor loadings resulted in a modified five factor model. In this model, Enjoyment and Achievement Motivation items loaded onto their original factors, not the reorganized factors. The second model contained two correlated factors, one representing positively worded items and one for negatively worded items. The third model (Figure 1) contained all seven factors: five trait

Table 6
Goodness of Fit Indicators for Tested Multitrait-Multimethod Models

Model	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	RMR	TLI
Aspirations and Self-perceptions Models					
Independence	7071.43	231	30.61	.147	.000
Five trait factors, correlated	895.45	197	4.55	.030	.880
Two method factors, corr.	1919.00	208	9.23	.043	.722
Five trait factors, correlated, and Two method factors, corr.	430.00	174	2.47	.019	.950

Note. Correlation matrices, means, and standard deviations are available from the author.

factors (Ambition, School Inspiration, Importance of Schooling, Achievement Motivation, and Enjoyment of Life) and two method factors (Positively Worded and Negatively Worded). Table 6 contains fit indices for these multitrait-multimethod models, and factor loadings, squared multiple correlations, and factor correlations are presented in Table 7.

Squared multiple correlations and fit statistics are substantially improved in the multitrait-multimethod model. The correlation between the method factors is large (r = .72), suggesting that the method effect may be low to moderate in strength. The Achievement Motivation scale remains largely intact, as does the Enjoyment scale (with the addition of Items 16 and 21). For items on the third and fourth factors—Life Achievement Motivation and Enjoyment of Life—squared multiple correlations (i.e., an estimate of item variance explained by the factor structure) are considerably higher for the multitrait-multimethod model than for the simpler five factor model that does not include method factors. Squared multiple correlations for items on the three remaining factors are similar in both models, suggesting that the method effect is greater among item scores on the Life Achievement Motivation and Enjoyment of Life scales. Inspection of factor loadings also provides evidence of a greater method effect among these two scales.

Discussion

The major purposes of the revision of the *Student Aspirations Survey* were to shorten the length of the instrument without seriously detracting from its reliability and increase the construct validity of the scales. The results of this study provide evidence that progress was made toward both goals. The slight decrease in internal consistency is acceptable in light of the more complete student responses, and confirmatory factor analysis results suggest that the Aspirations scales, if slightly reorganized, have acceptable levels of construct validity in the presence of a small to moderate method effect. Educators should consider the method effect when interpreting results.

Results were less promising, however, for the Conditions scales. The poor fit of models to the Conditions data could be due to scores' lack of normality, but while the respectable root mean square residuals are evidence in support of this, similar distributions for the Aspirations and Self-description scale scores did not prevent the fitting of a good model for those data. A more likely culprit is the tendency for the responses to Conditions items to correlate very highly with one another. These correlations could result from students perceiving school climate conditions holistically rather than specifically. Given other evidence of validity associated with these scales (Plucker, 1996; Plucker & Quaglia, in press), educators and researchers should interpret these 49 items collectively. Expectedly, responses to the Conditions scales exhibit convincing evidence of reliability (alpha = .95) when considered as a group.

The next steps in the development of the *Student Aspirations Survey* should be the refinement of the new scale, Importance of Schooling, and additional validity studies. Evidence of criterion-related validity (both concurrent and predictive) has not been gathered and should be a high priority. A majority of aspirations research and intervention efforts proceed under the assumption that aspirations are content general (i.e., aspirations cut across content areas and are not content specific). However, common sense suggests that individuals' may have strong aspirations within one content area (e.g., science) while they hold very low aspirations in other areas (e.g., writing, political science).

Figure 1. Multitrait-multimethod model of student aspirations and school climate perceptions as measured on the *Student Aspirations Survey.*

Table 7
Factor Loadings and Correlations for Multitrait-Multimethod Model of Aspirations Scales

		Trait Factors					Method Factors		
Variable	Item	1	2	3	4	5	Positive	Negative	SMC[a]
Ambition1	15					.70	.36		.62
Ambition2	17	.36						.32	.23
Ambition3	18	.61					.38		.51
Ambition4	23	.47					.47		.44
Ambition5	24	.52						.50	.52
Ambition6	25					.73	.41		.70
Inspiration1	14		.61				.34		.49
Inspiration2	16				.40			.24	.22
Inspiration3	19		.48				.29		.32
Inspiration4	20		.26			.37	.43		.47
Inspiration5	21				.40			.43	.32
Inspiration6	22		.62				.27		.45
AchMot1	77			.25			.54		.36
AchMot2	80			.19			.74		.58
AchMot3	81	.14		.07				.62	.41
AchMot4	83			.28				.40	.24
AchMot5	84			.12			.49		.25
Enjoy1	75				.62			.47	.60
Enjoy2	76				.48			.52	.49
Enjoy3	78				.15			.63	.42
Enjoy4	79				.01			.62	.38
Enjoy5	82				.19		.46		.25
Correlations									
Trait Factor 1		1.00							
Trait Factor 2		.14	1.00						
Trait Factor 3		.43	.16	1.00					
Trait Factor 4		.07	.65	.03		1.00			
Trait Factor 5		.34	.46	.52		.29	1.00		
Method Factor 1								1.00	
Method Factor 2								.77	1.00

Note. Omitted loadings and correlations constrained to equal zero. All loadings statistically significant (i.e., $p < .01$) except for loading of Item 79 (Enjoy4) on Factor 4 and Item 81 (AchMot3) of Factor 3.

[a] SMC = Squared Multiple Correlation

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The content specificity of aspirations may be especially profound with respect to gender differences (Farmer et al., 1995). Researchers have begun investigating content generality-specificity issues in regard to general affect (Marsh & Yeung, 1996) and aspirations (Plucker & Quaglia, 1996), and additional research in this area may provide the most useful information for educators planning intervention efforts to increase student aspirations.

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APPENDIX II

Aspirations Survey Report

Tremont Consolidated Grammar School

Grades 3 - 5. . . . . 340 - 357

Grades 6 - 8. . . . . 358 - 382

Ninth Graders from Tremont who attend Mount Desert Island High. . . . . . 383 - 408

Aspirations Survey Report

Tremont Consolidated Grammar School
Grades 3-5

May 2, 1997

Center for Research and Evaluation
College of Education
University of Maine
Orono, Maine 04469-5766
Phone: (207) 581-2411
FAX: (207) 581-2423

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Aspirations Survey Results

With over a decade of research in student aspirations, research units of the College of Education at the University of Maine have earned international recognition as leaders in the study of this topic. Through research and practical experience in schools, several factors have been identified which appear to affect student aspirations. These factors emphasize the importance of putting the student at the center of any school initiative or program. Specifically, eight conditions have been identified: achievement, belonging, curiosity, empowerment, excitement, mentoring, risk-taking, and self-confidence. These conditions do not represent an exhaustive list, but rather a fundamental core for schools that want students to have inspiration, ambitions, and, consequently, aspirations.

The *Aspirations Survey* was designed as a tool to assess the conditions in the school that affect student aspirations. The purpose of the survey is not to tell schools/districts what they already know about themselves, but rather to assess the conditions that affect student aspirations. To the extent that the eight conditions cut across both organizational and individual dimensions, schools can exercise interventions to foster these essential conditions.

The results of the survey are organized to provide the school community with a "snapshot" of student perceptions of themselves and their school environments at the time they completed the *Aspirations Survey*. Specifically, the results will describe: (1) how students spend their time and (2) their perceptions of themselves, of their classroom experiences, and of their classroom teachers. The combination of these factors influences the development of student aspirations. These results, in conjunction with other information about your school, community, and students, should be very useful in school reform efforts.

The report is divided into five sections.

Section I - **Framework for analysis**

Section II - **Demographics**

Section III - **Time allocation for specific activities**

Section IV - **Survey questions**

SECTION I FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

The results of the Aspirations Survey are clear and comprehensive, but they are meaningless unless one understands what all the numbers indicate. This section of the report is designed to help you understand the results and to create meaning for the survey. The Aspirations Survey Report is a reflection of your school; therefore, it is important that you take ownership of the data and begin the process of interpretation. The purpose of the report is not to compare schools, but rather to determine if you are satisfied with the results from your school. The key to analysis is to begin the process with an open mind and take an honest look at what the data are telling you. Here are some principles to guide you:

- First, look at the indicators that depict the whole population of students, such as how they spend their time.
- Second, begin the process of studying the data from the perspective of the eight conditions — *achievement, belonging, curiosity,* and so on.
- After your analyses of student characteristics and of the conditions affecting the students are complete, begin to look for connections among the results that may explain student responses. For example, if students in general claim to do very little homework, is it because they see very little value in it, because teachers do not check homework, or because they find the subject matter boring.

Finally, keep in mind that,

- analyzing the results is a process not an event.
- no one understands the dynamics of your school like you do.
- it is okay and useful to ask students to help in this process.
- it takes a great deal of time to analyze results well.
- you should look for comparisons within your own school (i.e., by grade level and gender.)
- the best way to analyze and make sense of the data is to talk about it with colleagues and students.
- you are analyzing the results of the survey to improve your school, not to find fault and place blame.
- every school or individual may see something different in the data. This is not only common, but healthy for purposes of discussion.

Analyzing data is a complex and multifaceted process. It takes time, commitment, and openness. You have the opportunity to see how your students perceive themselves and their school. The key to maximizing the survey analyses is to learn from the results and develop action plans for improving the current situation. Technical assistance and facilitation of this process is available by contracting an agreement with the National Center for Student Aspirations at the University of Maine, College of Education.

All scores throughout the report are presented as percentages of the total number of student responses, rounded to the nearest tenth of a percent.

Table 1. Age of Students (%)

8	9	10	11	12
7.7	34.6	25.0	28.8	3.8

Table 2. Gender of Students (%)

Female	Male
52.6	47.4

Table 3. Grade of Students (%)

3	4	5
37.5	28.6	33.9

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SECTION III TIME ALLOCATION FOR SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES

The *Aspirations Survey* asked students to indicate the amount of time spent each week on the following activities: homework, hanging out with friends, participating in sports or hobbies, reading for pleasure, working part time, watching television, and spending time with their families. These activities account for large amounts of time in the lives of most students. The activities are delineated as follows:

HOMEWORK:

work assigned by teachers or other school assignments of an instructional nature. The time allotted to study and to classes represents a significant portion of the productivity of students. While time spent in classes is determined by school, time allocated to school work outside of the classroom is not, and thus it is an important aspirations indicator.

Table 4. Student reports of time spent per week: DOING HOMEWORK

	n	Often	Sometimes	Never
Total	57	42.9	53.6	3.6
Female	30	48.3	48.3	3.4
Male	27	37.0	59.3	3.7
3rd Grade	21	14.3	76.2	9.5
4th Grade	16	43.8	56.3	0.0
5th Grade	19	73.7	26.3	0.0

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PLAYING WITH FRIENDS:

time spent with friends of the same or opposite sex, alone or in groups. Students typically spend considerable time conversing with others, exchanging ideas, feelings, norms, and values.

Table 5. Student reports of time spent per week: PLAYING WITH FRIENDS

	n	Often	Sometimes	Never
Total	57	32.1	57.1	10.7
Female	30	20.7	65.5	13.8
Male	27	44.4	48.1	7.4
3rd Grade	31	33.3	52.4	14.3
4th Grade	16	37.5	56.3	6.3
5th Grade	19	26.3	63.2	10.5

PARTICIPATING IN SPORTS OR HOBBIES:

activities or interests pursued outside of instructional time in school, which may or may not be related to school. Structured leisure activities such as sports, hobbies, and social interactions represent culturally defined pursuits. Some of these activities require participation with a predetermined system of rules, whereas others involve self-defined activities rather than competitive ones.

Table 6. Student reports of time spent per week: SPORTS OR HOBBIES

	n	Often	Sometimes	Never
Total	57	67.9	30.4	1.8
Female	30	62.1	34.5	3.4
Male	27	74.1	25.9	0.0
3rd Grade	21	71.4	23.8	4.8
4th Grade	16	68.8	31.3	0.0
5th Grade	19	63.2	36.8	0.0

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READING FOR PLEASURE:

reading that is not associated with school work. Magazines and newspapers may comprise much of the leisure reading for students.

Table 7. Student reports of time spent per week: READING FOR PLEASURE

	n	Often	Sometimes	Never
Total	57	42.9	48.2	8.9
Female	30	55.2	37.9	6.9
Male	27	29.6	59.3	11.1
3rd Grade	21	47.6	47.6	4.8
4th Grade	16	25.0	62.5	12.5
5th Grade	19	52.6	36.8	10.5

WATCHING TELEVISION OR VIDEOS:

watching television programs or videos, playing video games, and listening to music. This represents a significant leisure activity for many students. In an era when these activities have become more enticing for individuals, the impact of a "media prepared version of the world" may be significant.

Table 8. Student reports of time spent per week: WATCHING TV/VIDEOS

	n	Often	Sometimes	Never
Total	57	42.9	46.4	10.7
Female	30	37.9	51.7	10.3
Male	27	48.1	40.7	11.1
3rd Grade	21	52.4	38.1	9.5
4th Grade	16	43.8	56.3	0.0
5th Grade	19	31.6	47.4	21.1

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SPENDING TIME WITH FAMILY MEMBERS:

time spent either with the entire family or individual family members. It is often believed that adults as a whole invest very little time with young people. Individuals learn much about being an adult by observing, imitating, and interacting with adults. Thus, spending time with family members can be important in a young person's development.

Table 9. Student reports of time spent per week: SPENDING TIME WITH FAMILY

	n	Often	Sometimes	Never
Total	57	44.6	53.6	1.8
Female	30	37.9	58.6	3.4
Male	27	51.9	48.1	0.0
3rd Grade	21	47.6	47.6	4.8
4th Grade	16	43.8	56.3	0.0
5th Grade	19	42.1	57.9	0.0

DOING CHORES:

having responsibilities in and around the home. These chores may or may not lead to an allowance. In moderation, doing chores is often considered educational as a part of the student's life that will expand to become a major productive activity.

Table 10. Student reports of time spent per week: DOING CHORES

	n	Often	Sometimes	Never
Total	57	42.9	51.8	5.4
Female	30	44.8	51.7	3.4
Male	27	40.7	51.9	7.4
3rd Grade	21	52.4	42.9	4.8
4th Grade	16	37.5	50.0	12.5
5th Grade	19	36.8	63.2	0.0

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SECTION IV CONDITIONS AFFECTING STUDENT ASPIRATIONS

The following section summarizes student responses to questions that relate to the eight conditions that affect student aspirations. For ease of interpretation, the conditions (and their corresponding indicators) are arranged into four distinct groups. The narrative below describes the importance of the eight conditions and how they can impact student aspirations.

Impacting Student Aspirations:
Eight Conditions That Make a Difference

The buses are rolling, school bells are ringing, and the future of America marches forward to begin another day of learning. The nation's students - tykes to teens - spend the typical school day sorting bits and pieces of information: a little math, English, social studies and science, perhaps a bit of gym, art or music, some study time, free time, snack time, and a hodgepodge of extracurricular activities. The bell rings again, and students scatter as teachers prepare for another day.

What can change this pattern of repetition, rhetoric and resignation?

Is there some magical potion or high-tech substance that can bind these fragmented pieces into a solid framework for positive and relevant learning and growing experiences, to help students make sense out of chaos, get excited about education because its makes sense, and excel because it's good for their immediate and long-term future?

There is, indeed. That elusive adhesive - the glue that holds the educational process together - is student aspirations. The things that really make a difference in the teaching and learning environment of a school and in the lives and achievement of students is a matter of attitude, of believing in the value and contribution of every child so that they, in turn, will believe in themselves. This attitude is also based in the belief that every teacher has the ability and desire to make the entire process of education informative, meaningful and enjoyable. Aspirations is more than having goals and ambition. The formula also requires inspiration - a critical ingredient that must be provided and nourished by educators and entire school communities. But what makes such a simple concept so difficult is that it requires change - change in perspective and practice.

The attitude that forms and fuels student aspirations has no geographic, cultural, gender, age or economic boundaries. It works in the poorest and wealthiest of school systems. It is our greatest untapped educational resource, and it holds the broadest potential for successful schools and students.

Concentrating on student aspirations moves us beyond academics and takes us further than testing students about what they know and can do. It allows us to understand how they think and feel about themselves and the schools they attend, who they are as individuals, and above all, how they can be contributing members of the school community.

The importance of students feeling good about themselves has been overshadowed by the competitive drive to be number one in academics. But does it really matter who's first if students don't believe in what they're achieving or see its relevance to their lives?

We all want our children to be successful academically and to be productive and responsible citizens, but we also want them to value learning, respect others, be in control of their lives, have the self-confidence to dream, chart a course and go after their goals, and not be afraid to fail.

So how are student aspirations manifested in the schools? What factors are at work in creating and maintaining a learning and teaching atmosphere that is productive, positive and pleasant? A decade of research and direct work with students and educators in public schools has led to the identification of eight conditions that impact student aspirations. These conditions have been found to make a positive - and crucial - difference for all children.

- **Achievement:** recognizing and appreciating effort, perseverance, citizenship, and the learning of more than subject matter, as well as academics. High grades in subject matter are only one indicator of success in school, but the importance put on grades by educators, parents and society at-large overwhelms and, unfortunately, often defeats other very important learning attributes.

- **Belonging**: establishing a sense of community and participation, and believing that students are valuable members. Schools and society expect students to be active participants in the learning process, and responsible, contributing citizens. The pertinent question is, do the schools that set standards and expectations for student learning, behavior and success view and treat them as valuable members of the community or just as names or numbers? Schools may be bureaucratic, but their democratic roots should extend to and nourish the students as full partners in the entire learning process.

- **Curiosity**: allowing and encouraging students to question and explore, and to keep this important inquisitiveness ignited through the teen-age years. A major challenge for educators is to sustain and nourish the natural curiosity of children which so often fizzles once they reach high school. Inquisitiveness is a powerful force for further learning; every classroom should be a learning laboratory.

• **Empowerment**: giving every student a voice in the learning environment; letting them know they matter and are responsible for their decisions. If students are expected to be independent thinkers, they must first be trusted enough to have a voice in their learning. An empowering school environment embraces and promotes mutual trust, and acceptance of individual rights, responsibilities, options and beliefs. It allows students to strive and gain mastery of their actions, to understand and accept consequences, and to learn from their mistakes and move forward with greater knowledge and understanding.

• **Excitement**: providing an interesting and enjoyable learning experience because it's OK to have fun while learning. When students are excited about something, they are eagerly engaged, actively involved, and they learn more. Learning is a serious matter, but it's not a solemn event. If we expect students to be excited about learning and enthusiastic about coming to school, we must provide diverse, interesting, challenging and enjoyable experiences.

• **Mentoring**: having a caring adult in the school that each child can feel personally connected to, can turn to for advice, and can trust. In the chaotic and confusing set of experiences and signals that children must process every day, it's imperative that they have at least one consistent adult in their lives. Too often in today's society, children must find that stable connection, that caring adult they can admire, trust and seek out for advice at school because it's not available at home.

• **Risk-Taking**: supporting students who take healthy chances and letting them know it is all right to fail; providing students the opportunity to understand consequences, as well as benefits. Any type of new learning can pose a risk for students; for some, it might be taking a math class; for others, simply raising their hand in class. Creativity and innovation spring from the sense of security and support that allows and encourages children to take chances.

• **Self-Confidence**: encouraging students to believe in themselves, that they can be successful and can make a difference; helping them to be comfortable and assured in their personal and emotional growth. Students need to know that others have high expectations for their success, and they also need the self-respect that comes from looking to themselves for approval, as well as from peers. Schools that value, respect and celebrate the opinions and ideas of all students foster positive development of self-worth and self-confidence.

By no means is this an exhaustive list of the conditions that impact the development of student aspirations, but these factors are too important not to practice. Enhancing the environment to allow and bolster the growth of aspirations costs virtually nothing. It's a decision that each educator and every school should make and work together to accomplish.

Recognizing student aspirations as a critical variable in the lives of students is essential. If students don't enjoy or understand the meaning and purpose of learning, school is little more than nine months of lost time and wasted potential. We can and must make schools better places for students. Time is too short and the price too dear not to make aspirations a priority in our schools. Student aspirations, after all, are the source and substance of dreams and achievement.

Table 11. ITEMS CONCERNING CURIOSITY AND EXCITEMENT

	TOTAL	FEMALE	MALE	3rd	4th	5th
During school...						
the work is so easy it is boring.						
Often	11.1	4.3	18.2	13.3	8.3	11.8
Sometimes	68.9	82.6	54.5	66.7	75.0	70.6
Never	20.0	13.0	27.3	20.0	16.7	17.6
we work on solving problems.						
Often	44.4	33.3	55.6	55.0	26.7	47.4
Sometimes	51.9	59.3	44.4	40.0	73.3	47.4
Never	3.7	7.4	0.0	5.0	0.0	5.3
I have fun.						
Often	41.8	42.9	40.7	28.6	33.3	63.2
Sometimes	54.5	53.6	55.6	66.7	60.0	36.8
Never	3.6	3.6	3.7	4.8	6.7	0.0
time seems to fly by.						
Often	42.0	40.0	44.0	55.6	13.3	52.9
Sometimes	44.0	52.0	36.0	27.8	66.7	41.2
Never	14.0	8.0	20.0	16.7	20.0	5.9
My teacher...						
makes me feel comfortable when I ask for help.						
Often	58.5	63.0	53.8	52.6	25.0	94.4
Sometimes	39.6	33.3	46.2	47.4	68.8	5.6
Never	1.9	3.7	0.0	0.0	6.3	0.0
makes class fun.						
Often	58.3	52.0	65.2	52.9	30.8	83.3
Sometimes	39.6	44.0	34.8	47.1	61.5	16.7
Never	2.1	4.0	0.0	0.0	7.7	0.0

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Table 12. ITEMS CONCERNING BELONGING, MENTORING, AND EMPOWERMENT

	TOTAL	FEMALE	MALE	3rd	4th	5th
During school...						
it is okay to ask a classmate for help.						
Often	9.4	7.1	12.0	11.1	0.0	15.8
Sometimes	64.2	60.7	68.0	77.8	53.3	63.2
Never	26.4	32.1	20.0	11.1	46.7	21.1
I can work on projects with others.						
Often	20.8	16.7	25.0	11.1	15.4	35.3
Sometimes	60.4	62.5	58.3	55.6	61.5	64.7
Never	18.8	20.8	16.7	33.3	23.1	0.0
I share my ideas.						
Often	37.3	42.3	32.0	16.7	66.7	33.3
Sometimes	52.9	50.0	56.0	66.7	20.0	66.7
Never	9.8	7.7	12.0	16.7	13.3	0.0
My teacher...						
encourages me to find answers by myself.						
Often	70.4	69.0	72.0	85.0	66.7	57.9
Sometimes	25.9	24.1	28.0	15.0	26.7	36.8
Never	3.7	6.9	0.0	0.0	6.7	5.3
likes it when I help others in class.						
Often	31.5	37.0	25.9	25.0	20.0	47.4
Sometimes	61.1	55.6	66.7	65.0	66.7	52.6
Never	7.4	7.4	7.4	10.0	13.3	0.0
wants me to ask questions.						
Often	37.7	44.4	30.8	20.0	43.8	52.9
Sometimes	56.6	55.6	57.7	70.0	56.3	41.2
Never	5.7	0.0	11.5	10.0	0.0	5.9
lets us decide what we are going to do.						
Often	5.7	3.7	7.7	5.3	0.0	11.1
Sometimes	73.6	81.5	65.4	84.2	50.0	83.3
Never	20.8	14.8	26.9	10.5	50.0	5.6
cares about my problems and feelings.						
Often	51.8	53.3	50.0	60.0	31.3	57.9
Sometimes	44.6	40.0	50.0	40.0	56.3	42.1
Never	3.6	6.7	0.0	0.0	12.5	0.0

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Table 13. ITEMS CONCERNING RISK-TAKING AND SELF-CONFIDENCE

	TOTAL	FEMALE	MALE	3rd	4th	5th
During school...						
I only answer questions when I am sure of the answer.						
Often	35.8	33.3	38.5	47.6	14.3	38.9
Sometimes	49.1	40.7	57.7	52.4	42.9	50.0
Never	15.1	25.9	3.8	0.0	42.9	11.1
when the problems are too hard, I give up.						
Often	3.7	3.6	3.8	5.3	6.3	0.0
Sometimes	27.8	32.1	23.1	21.1	37.5	22.2
Never	68.5	64.3	73.1	73.7	56.3	77.8
My teacher...						
likes it when I try something new in class.						
Often	72.0	70.8	73.1	61.1	73.3	82.4
Sometimes	28.0	29.2	26.9	38.9	26.7	17.6
Never	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

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Table 14. ITEMS CONCERNING ACHIEVEMENT

	TOTAL	FEMALE	MALE	3rd	4th	5th
During school...						
when I work hard, my effort is rewarded.						
Often	35.4	33.3	37.5	33.3	31.3	41.2
Sometimes	52.1	54.2	50.0	66.7	50.0	41.2
Never	12.5	12.5	12.5	0.0	18.8	17.6
the things I learn are important to my future.						
Often	85.7	86.2	85.2	85.7	86.7	84.2
Sometimes	14.3	13.8	14.8	14.3	13.3	15.8
Never	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
I pay attention.						
Often	65.5	67.9	63.0	65.0	37.5	89.5
Sometimes	34.5	32.1	37.0	35.0	62.5	10.5
Never	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
I keep trying even when I don't understand some things.						
Often	69.6	69.0	70.4	57.1	75.0	78.9
Sometimes	28.6	31.0	25.9	42.9	18.8	21.1
Never	1.8	0.0	3.7	0.0	6.3	0.0
I want to do well.						
Often	96.4	93.1	100.0	100.0	87.5	100.0
Sometimes	3.6	6.9	0.0	0.0	12.5	0.0
Never	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
it is my responsibility to do well.						
Often	80.4	79.3	81.5	85.7	68.8	84.2
Sometimes	19.6	20.7	18.5	14.3	31.3	15.8
Never	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
My teacher...						
tells me I am doing a good job when I try my best.						
Often	61.1	57.1	65.4	65.0	37.5	77.8
Sometimes	35.2	39.3	30.8	35.0	56.3	16.7
Never	3.7	3.6	3.8	0.0	6.3	5.6
checks my homework.						
Often	78.9	80.0	77.8	85.7	75.0	78.9
Sometimes	17.5	16.7	18.5	9.5	25.0	21.1
Never	3.5	3.3	3.7	4.8	0.0	0.0

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Aspirations Survey Report

Tremont Consolidated Grammar School
Grades 6-8

May 2, 1997

Center for Research and Evaluation
College of Education
University of Maine
Orono, Maine 04469-5766
Phone: (207) 581-2411
FAX: (207) 581-2423

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Aspirations Survey Results

With over a decade of research in student aspirations, research units of the College of Education at the University of Maine have earned international recognition as leaders in the study of this topic. Through research and practical experience in schools, several factors have been identified which appear to affect student aspirations. These factors emphasize the importance of putting the student at the center of any school initiative or program. Specifically, eight conditions have been identified: achievement, belonging, curiosity, empowerment, excitement, mentoring, risk-taking, and self-confidence. These conditions do not represent an exhaustive list, but rather a fundamental core for schools that want students to have inspiration, ambitions, and, consequently, aspirations.

The *Aspirations Survey* was designed as a tool to assess the conditions in the school that affect student aspirations. The purpose of the survey is not to tell schools/districts what they already know about themselves, but rather to assess the conditions that affect student aspirations. To the extent that the eight conditions cut across both organizational and individual dimensions, schools can exercise interventions to foster these essential conditions.

The results of the survey are organized to provide the school community with a "snapshot" of student perceptions of themselves and their school environments at the time they completed the *Aspirations Survey*. Specifically, the results will describe: (1) how students spend their time and (2) their perceptions of themselves, of their classroom experiences, and of their classroom teachers. The combination of these factors influences the development of student aspirations. These results, in conjunction with other information about your school, community, and students, should be very useful in school reform efforts.

The report is divided into six sections.

Section I - **Framework for analysis**
Section II - **Demographics**
Section III - **Time allocation for specific activities**
Section IV - **Students' self-perception**
Section V - **Components of aspirations: levels of inspiration and ambitions**
Section VI - **Conditions affecting student aspirations**

SECTION I FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

The results of the Aspirations Survey are clear and comprehensive, but they are meaningless unless one understands what all the numbers indicate. This section of the report is designed to help you understand the results and to create meaning for the survey. The Aspirations Survey Report is a reflection of your school; therefore, it is important that you take ownership of the data and begin the process of interpretation. The purpose of the report is not to compare schools, but rather to determine if you are satisfied with the results from your school. The key to analysis is to begin the process with an open mind and take an honest look at what the data are telling you. Here are some principles to guide you:

- First, look at the indicators that depict the whole population of students (i.e., how they spend their time, their levels of inspiration and ambitions, their level of achievement motivation, and their level of general enjoyment of life.)
- Second, begin the process of studying the data from the eight conditions — *achievement, belonging, curiosity,* and so on. It is important to review each condition separately, otherwise the data may become confusing and unmanageable.
- After your analyses of student characteristics and of the conditions affecting the students are complete, begin to look for connections among the results that may explain student responses. For example, if students in general claim to do very little homework, is it because they see very little value in it, because teachers do not check homework, or because they find the subject matter boring?

Finally, keep in mind that,

- analyzing the results is a process not an event.
- no one understands the dynamics of your school like you do.
- it is okay and useful to ask students to help in this process.
- it takes a great deal of time to analyze results well.
- you should look for comparisons within your own school (i.e., by grade level and gender.)
- the best way to analyze and make sense of the data is to talk about it with colleagues and students.

- you are analyzing the results of the survey to improve your school, not to find fault and place blame.
- every school or individual may see something different in the data. This is not only common, but healthy for purposes of discussion.

Analyzing data is a complex and multifaceted process. It takes time, commitment, and openness. You have the opportunity to see how your students perceive themselves and their school. The key to maximizing the survey analyses is to learn from the results and develop action plans for improving the current situation. Technical assistance and facilitation of this process is available by contracting an agreement with the National Center for Student Aspirations at the University of Maine, College of Education.

All scores throughout the report are presented as percentages of the total number of student responses, rounded to the nearest tenth of a percent.

Table 1. Age of Students (%)

11	12	13	14	15
3.8	30.8	38.5	25.0	1.9

Table 2. Grade of Students (%)

6	7	8
36.5	23.1	40.4

Table 3. Gender of Students (%)

Female	Male
51.9	48.1

Table 4. Parents' Education	**Mother's Education (%)**	**Father's Education (%)**
Did not finish high school	7.7	16.0
Graduated from high school	40.4	40.0
Attended college	30.8	20.0
Graduated from college	21.2	24.0

Table 5. Self-described Academic Ability of Students (%)

Below Average	Average	Above Average
0.0	44.2	55.8

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SECTION III TIME ALLOCATION FOR SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES

The *Aspirations Survey* asked students to indicate the amount of time spent each week on the following activities: homework, hanging out with friends, participating in sports or hobbies, reading for pleasure, working part time, watching television, and spending time with their families. These activities account for large amounts of time in the lives of most students. The activities are delineated as follows:

HOMEWORK:

work assigned by teachers or other school assignments of an instructional nature. The time allotted to study and to classes represents a significant portion of the productivity of students. While time spent in classes is determined by school, time allocated to school work outside of the classroom is not, and thus it is an important aspirations indicator.

Table 6. Student reports of time (hours) spent per week: DOING HOMEWORK

		NUMBER OF HOURS PER WEEK						
	N	0	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	11+
Total	52	5.8	17.3	34.6	17.3	9.6	9.6	5.8
Female	27	0.0	14.8	44.4	18.5	7.4	7.4	7.4
Male	25	12.0	20.0	24.0	16.0	12.0	12.0	4.0
6th Grade	19	0.0	21.1	31.6	15.8	10.5	10.5	10.5
7th Grade	12	0.0	25.0	25.0	25.0	8.3	16.7	0.0
8th Grade	21	14.3	9.5	42.9	14.3	9.5	4.8	4.8

HANGING OUT WITH FRIENDS:

time spent with friends of the same or opposite sex, alone or in groups. Students typically spend considerable time conversing with others, exchanging ideas, feelings, norms, and values.

Table 7. Student reports of time (hours) spent per week: HANGING OUT WITH FRIENDS

		NUMBER OF HOURS PER WEEK						
	N	0	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	11+
Total	52	9.6	26.9	26.9	21.2	7.7	1.9	5.8
Female	27	7.4	37.0	14.8	18.5	11.1	3.7	7.4
Male	25	12.0	16.0	40.0	24.0	4.0	0.0	4.0
6th Grade	19	15.8	21.1	26.3	26.3	5.3	5.3	0.0
7th Grade	12	16.7	25.0	33.3	8.3	8.3	0.0	8.3
8th Grade	21	0.0	33.3	23.8	23.8	9.5	0.0	9.5

PARTICIPATING IN SPORTS OR HOBBIES:

activities or interests pursued outside of instructional time in school, which may or may not be related to school. Structured leisure activities such as sports, hobbies, and social interactions represent culturally defined pursuits. Some of these activities require participation with a predetermined system of rules, whereas others involve self-defined activities rather than competitive ones.

Table 8. Student reports of time (hours) spent per week: SPORTS OR HOBBIES

		NUMBER OF HOURS PER WEEK						
	N	0	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	11+
Total	52	9.6	19.2	19.2	19.2	13.5	7.7	11.5
Female	27	14.8	25.9	25.9	11.1	11.1	3.7	7.4
Male	25	4.0	12.0	12.0	28.0	16.0	12.0	16.0
6th Grade	19	5.3	26.3	10.5	26.3	21.1	0.0	10.5
7th Grade	12	16.7	8.3	8.3	25.0	8.3	16.7	16.7
8th Grade	21	9.5	19.0	33.3	9.5	9.5	9.5	9.5

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READING FOR PLEASURE:

reading that is not associated with school work. Magazines and newspapers may comprise much of the leisure reading for students.

Table 9. Student reports of time (hours) spent per week: READING FOR PLEASURE

		NUMBER OF HOURS PER WEEK						
	N	0	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	11+
Total	52	13.5	30.8	32.7	17.3	1.9	0.0	3.8
Female	27	14.8	29.6	40.7	11.1	3.7	0.0	0.0
Male	25	12.0	32.0	24.0	24.0	0.0	0.0	8.0
6th Grade	19	15.8	26.3	36.8	15.8	0.0	0.0	5.3
7th Grade	12	8.3	58.3	8.3	16.7	8.3	0.0	0.0
8th Grade	21	14.3	19.0	42.9	19.0	0.0	0.0	4.8

WATCHING TELEVISION OR VIDEOS:

watching television programs or videos, playing video games, and listening to music. This represents a significant leisure activity for many students. In an era when these activities have become more enticing for individuals, the impact of a "media prepared version of the world" may be significant.

Table 10. Student reports of time (hours) spent per week: WATCHING TV/VIDEOS

		NUMBER OF HOURS PER WEEK						
	N	0	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	11+
Total	52	3.9	21.6	17.6	17.6	15.7	5.9	17.6
Female	27	7.7	26.9	11.5	23.1	23.1	0.0	7.7
Male	25	0.0	16.0	24.0	12.0	8.0	12.0	28.0
6th Grade	19	5.3	42.1	15.8	15.8	15.8	0.0	5.3
7th Grade	12	0.0	8.3	16.7	16.7	16.7	8.3	33.3
8th Grade	21	5.0	10.0	20.0	20.0	15.0	10.0	20.0

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WORKING PART TIME:

gainful employment that results in income for the student. In moderation, working part time is often considered educational as a part of the student's life that will expand to become a major productive activity.

Table 11. Student reports of time (hours) spent per week: WORKING PART TIME

		NUMBER OF HOURS PER WEEK						
	N	0	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	11+
Total	52	35.3	29.4	21.6	9.8	2.0	2.0	0.0
Female	27	50.0	26.9	15.4	3.8	3.8	0.0	0.0
Male	25	20.0	32.0	28.0	16.0	0.0	4.0	0.0
6th Grade	19	42.1	21.1	21.1	10.5	0.0	5.3	0.0
7th Grade	12	41.7	41.7	8.3	8.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
8th Grade	21	25.0	30.0	30.0	10.0	5.0	0.0	0.0

SPENDING TIME WITH FAMILY MEMBERS:

time spent either with the entire family or individual family members. It is often believed that adults as a whole invest very little time with young people. Individuals learn much about being an adult by observing, imitating, and interacting with adults. Thus, spending time with family members can be important in a young person's development.

Table 12. Student reports of time (hours) spent per week: SPENDING TIME WITH FAMILY

		NUMBER OF HOURS PER WEEK						
	N	0	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	11+
Total	52	9.6	21.2	17.3	17.3	7.7	5.8	21.2
Female	27	14.8	18.5	18.5	18.5	11.1	3.7	14.8
Male	25	4.0	24.0	16.0	16.0	4.0	8.0	28.0
6th Grade	19	21.1	5.3	21.1	21.1	0.0	10.5	21.1
7th Grade	12	0.0	41.7	25.0	0.0	8.3	0.0	25.0
8th Grade	21	4.8	23.8	9.5	23.8	14.3	4.8	19.0

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SECTION IV STUDENTS' SELF-PERCEPTIONS

Aspirations cannot be simply defined as individual dreams or ambitions. Rather, aspirations are related to students' sense of self and how it relates to important elements of success in their lives. This section consists of questions designed to assess how students perceive themselves on two dimensions: (1) *Achievement Motivations* and (2) *General Enjoyment of Life* (see Tables 13 and 14).

Achievement Motivation refers to a sense of goal orientation--accomplishing more--reaching higher, but sensing the connection between present action and goal realization.

Table 13. ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION

Percent of students who agree or strongly agree	TOTAL	FEMALE	MALE	6TH	7TH	8TH
I like to be very good at what I do.	96.0	92.3	100.0	94.7	100.0	94.7
I feel I can do just about anything if I put my mind to it.	83.7	80.0	87.5	84.2	66.7	94.4
I never make plans or set goals for myself.	21.3	25.0	17.4	21.1	36.4	11.8
Getting good grades is not important to me.	20.0	12.0	28.0	15.8	33.3	15.8
I can be very disciplined and push myself.	76.0	69.2	83.3	63.2	66.7	94.7

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The category *General Enjoyment of Life* deals with the assurance, the confidence, the participation in positive experiences necessary to successful and effective functioning.

Table 14. GENERAL ENJOYMENT OF LIFE

Percent of students who agree or strongly agree	TOTAL	FEMALE	MALE	6TH	7TH	8TH	
I usually feel tired and bored.	44.9	56.0	33.3	36.8	91.7	22.2	69.2
I often have trouble getting motivated to do things.	34.0	34.6	33.3	26.3	50.0	31.6	53.8
I don't seem to succeed no matter what I do.	20.8	28.0	13.0	22.2	33.3	11.1	30.8
I am not interested in very many things.	10.2	7.7	13.0	0.0	33.3	5.3	23.1
I am often in a good mood.	86.0	80.8	91.7	89.5	66.7	94.7	69.2

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Inspiration indicates that an activity is exciting and enjoyable to the student and indicates an awareness of being fully and richly involved in life here and now.

Table 15. Students' level of INSPIRATION

Percent of students who agree or strongly agree	TOTAL	FEMALE	MALE	6TH	7TH	8TH
Most of the things I do in school I find enjoyable.	65.4	55.6	76.0	63.2	41.7	81.0
School causes a great deal of stress for me.	50.0	63.0	36.0	47.4	66.7	42.9
When I'm at school, time seems to fly by.	50.0	51.9	48.0	47.4	25.0	66.7
School is important to my life on a regular basis.	86.5	88.9	84.0	84.2	75.0	95.2
I find it hard to concentrate in classes.	28.8	40.7	16.0	31.6	33.3	23.8
I find excitement in almost every class I attend.	27.5	19.2	36.0	22.2	8.3	42.9

Ambitions assesses the perception that an activity is important as a means to future goals. It assesses the perception that it is both possible and desirable to think in future terms and to plan for future goals.

Table 16. Students' level of AMBITIONS

Percent of students who agree or strongly agree	TOTAL	FEMALE	MALE	6TH	7TH	8TH
What I learn in school will benefit my future.	92.3	100.0	84.0	94.7	91.7	90.5
I give little thought to my future.	19.2	22.2	16.0	26.3	33.3	4.8
I am looking forward to a successful career.	96.2	96.3	96.0	100.0	83.3	100.0
I have high goals and expectations for myself.	78.0	73.1	83.3	61.1	75.0	95.0
I don't expect very much of myself in the future.	4.0	7.7	0.0	5.3	8.3	0.0
Most of the things I learn in school are important to my future.	86.5	92.6	80.0	89.5	75.0	90.5

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1. Achievement

Achievement requires effort, accomplishment, citizenship, and perseverance. Parents and educators have traditionally used a narrow view of *achievement* that refers only to academic achievement, innate ability, or to who is "best in the class." A broader view defines *achievement* as the act or accomplishment of completing a task through effort and perseverance. This definition supports students' initiative; therefore, achievement is normative not only in terms of test scores and intelligence quotients, but in terms of personal accomplishments and perseverance.
The concept of *achievement*, then, is not solely dependent on innate capacities, but includes students' personal efforts as well.

Table 17. Condition of ACHIEVEMENT

Overall, when I think about my classes...	TOTAL	FEMALE	MALE	6TH	7TH	8TH
I stop trying when I don't understand some things.	17.6	30.8	4.0	15.8	16.7	20.0
I believe I can always improve.	90.4	88.9	92.0	100.0	66.7	95.2
In general, my teachers...						
tell me to keep trying even when I struggle.	88.2	80.8	96.0	78.9	83.3	100.0
like it when I try my best even when I get a wrong answer.	86.0	88.5	83.3	78.9	75.0	100.0
tell me I'm doing a good job when I try my best.	88.0	84.6	91.7	78.9	91.7	94.7
let me know it is important to be successful in school.	92.0	92.3	91.7	89.5	83.3	100.0
never check assigned homework to see if it is done correctly.	6.1	7.7	4.3	5.6	16.7	0.0

* Data reported are percentages of students agreeing or strongly agreeing with each item.

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2. Belonging

Belonging is a relationship between two or more individuals characterized by a sense of connection, support, and community. *Belonging* includes the experience of being a valued member of a group and the diminishment of barriers between groups. *Belonging* excludes relating to others as objects or potential competitors. The sense of *belonging* is a necessary condition for well-being and social learning. The experience of *belonging* provides engagement and is essential to understanding oneself as competent. This kind of relationship is generally believed to increase intrinsic motivation, for it encourages and fosters a sense of competence.

Table 18. Condition of BELONGING

Overall, when I think about my classes...	TOTAL	FEMALE	MALE	6TH	7TH	8TH	
I never have the opportunity to work with others.	15.7	19.2	12.0	15.8	25.0	10.0	38.5
my thoughts are accepted.	81.3	75.0	87.5	83.3	58.3	94.4	84.6
In general, my teachers...							
encourage me to help others in class.	68.0	61.5	75.0	57.9	66.7	78.9	76.9
accept the fact that different students have different opinions.	80.0	76.9	83.3	89.5	33.3	100.0	69.2
value my opinions.	66.7	62.5	70.8	66.7	41.7	83.3	69.2
do not value different opinions.	23.4	26.1	20.8	16.7	36.4	22.2	8.3

* Data reported are percentages of students agreeing or strongly agreeing with each item.

3. Curiosity

Curiosity is characterized as inquisitiveness--an eagerness and strong desire to learn new or interesting things--and a desire to satisfy the mind with new discoveries. *Curiosity* is an intrinsic motivation that exists at birth. The intensity of *curiosity* diminishes over time due to a habituating effect of the environment. Educators must create school environments that promote questioning and creative exploration to counteract this trend and allow for the perpetuation of *curiosity*.

Table 19. Condition of CURIOSITY

Overall, when I think about my classes...	TOTAL	FEMALE	MALE	6TH	7TH	8TH	
I learn about things I did not know before.	94.1	88.9	100.0	94.7	100.0	90.5	84.6
I explore problems.	70.6	65.4	76.0	68.4	58.3	80.0	76.9
I seek solutions to complex problems.	76.5	65.4	88.0	73.7	58.3	90.0	69.2
In general, my teachers...							
want students to be interested in learning.	92.0	92.3	91.7	89.5	83.3	100.0	92.3
make me feel uncomfortable when I ask for help.	18.4	28.0	8.3	26.3	16.7	11.1	30.8
encourage me to learn new things.	86.0	80.0	92.0	83.3	75.0	95.0	83.3
discourage me from asking questions.	10.0	11.5	8.3	15.8	8.3	5.3	30.8

* Data reported are percentages of students agreeing or strongly agreeing with each item.

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4. Empowerment

Empowerment refers to students' ability to take control and gain mastery of their actions. Most *empowerment* research in education attempts to empower schools, principals, or teachers. However, a school system that supports the condition of *empowerment* is one that strives to and ultimately succeeds in empowering its students. An innate desire for self-determination is reached when individuals have the ability to choose among real choices. *Empowerment* can only be achieved in an environment that promotes mutual trust and the acceptance of individual rights, responsibilities, options, and beliefs. Thus, students are more likely to be empowered in schools where all individuals are respected and encouraged to be independent thinkers and actors.

Table 20. Condition of EMPOWERMENT

Overall, when I think about my classes...	TOTAL	FEMALE	MALE	6TH	7TH	8TH
I am not allowed to express my thoughts.	26.9	33.3	20.0	10.5	66.7	19.0
In general, my teachers...						
allow me to make choices about what I learn.	54.0	53.8	54.2	36.8	25.0	89.5
ask for my opinions/ideas.	67.3	56.0	79.2	63.2	66.7	72.2
treat boys and girls the same.	56.9	42.3	72.0	52.6	66.7	55.0
make it difficult for me to "be myself."	36.7	41.7	32.0	27.8	50.0	36.8

* Data reported are percentages of students agreeing or strongly agreeing with each item.

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5. Excitement

The condition of *excitement* involves being interested in something, being emotionally involved, or having an intense experience or desire of some kind. *Excitement* is associated with being self-confident, curious about life, and prepared to meet the challenges of the day. *Excitement* routinely involves a response to a challenge that individuals have freely chosen and that they feel competent in tackling. Students who do not experience this freedom of choice and competency may experience anxiety rather than *excitement*. Schools that foster *excitement provide* diversity in the delivery of their lessons, safe and secure environments, respect for individuality, personal challenges, and mentoring.

Table 21. Condition of EXCITEMENT

Overall, when I think about my classes...	TOTAL	FEMALE	MALE	6TH	7TH	8TH
I leave with a feeling of accomplishment.	65.4	70.4	60.0	68.4	25.0	85.7
I am usually bored.	41.2	46.2	36.0	27.8	58.3	42.9
I learn about things in the real world.	80.8	74.1	88.0	89.5	66.7	81.0
I never have fun.	14.0	7.7	20.8	15.8	25.0	5.3
In general, my teachers...						
make class exciting.	57.1	53.8	60.9	68.4	25.0	66.7

* Data reported are percentages of students agreeing or strongly agreeing with each item.

A01

A02

6. Mentoring

Mentoring, an intervention designed to maintain students' motivation, has many goals. A successful *mentor* will stimulate new interests, model constructive ways of relating to the world, convey important information about problem-solving and exerting control over one's environment, and provide a caring, stable environment in what may otherwise be a chaotic set of experiences. *Mentors*, either teachers or other students, should exhibit patience, encouragement, and assertiveness, and they should have high expectations of their protégés.

Table 22. Condition of MENTORING

Overall, when I think about my classes...	TOTAL	FEMALE	MALE	6TH	7TH	8TH
no one encourages me.	19.2	18.5	20.0	10.5	25.0	23.8
classmates never talk to me about what I am doing.	21.6	30.8	12.0	21.1	33.3	15.0
In general, my teachers...						
care about my success in class.	94.0	96.0	92.0	94.4	91.7	95.0
serve as role models to me.	54.0	57.7	50.0	57.9	33.3	63.2
expect me to succeed and help me to do so.	81.6	76.9	87.0	84.2	83.3	77.8
care about my problems and feelings.	72.9	75.0	70.8	64.7	75.0	78.9

* Data reported are percentages of students agreeing or strongly agreeing with each item.

7. Risk-Taking

Risk-taking is defined as making decisions based on information about the potential losses involved and about the significance and probability of such losses. Successful *risk-taking* is a deliberate and thoughtful activity that results in making healthy, sensible, and rational choices. This process requires practice. Schools can encourage *risk-taking* by providing an environment that allows students to experience the excitement associated with successful decision-making and adequate support for unsuccessful risks. Students must learn to gather information about a given course of action, examine the options, and make plans to minimize dangerous risks. Healthy *risk-taking* is associated with creativity, courage, and innovation; all of which are important in student aspirations.

Table 23. Condition of RISK-TAKING

Overall, when I think about my classes...	TOTAL	FEMALE	MALE	6TH	7TH	8TH
I feel comfortable asking questions.	72.0	56.0	88.0	66.7	66.7	80.0
I feel comfortable going to another student for help.	86.5	77.8	96.0	78.9	83.3	95.2
In general, my teachers...						
do not allow me to explore as much as I want to.	29.4	26.9	32.0	42.1	33.3	15.0
encourage me to find answers on my own.	94.0	92.0	96.0	89.5	91.7	100.0
support me when I take chances in the classroom.	61.5	55.6	68.0	57.9	50.0	71.4
are too critical and insensitive to others.	24.0	26.9	20.8	31.6	41.7	5.3

* Data reported are percentages of students agreeing or strongly agreeing with each item.

8. Self-Confidence

Self-confidence refers to the extent of students' belief in themselves. It is related to self-regard, self-esteem, self-concept, self-worth, and self-respect. *Self-confidence* is characterized by a positive and healthy outlook on life and a looking inward for approval rather than seeking it only from others. Teachers, parents, and peers all have the ability and potential to help students' *self-confidence* and thus enhance the quality of their academic and personal achievement.

Table 24. Condition of SELF-CONFIDENCE

Overall, when I think about my classes...	TOTAL	FEMALE	MALE	6TH	7TH	8TH
I am confident in my ability to do well.	82.4	70.4	95.8	84.2	66.7	90.0
I find it enjoyable regardless of what others may think.	54.9	57.7	52.0	57.9	41.7	60.0
I dislike almost everything I do.	25.0	37.0	12.0	21.1	33.3	23.8
I have a generally positive outlook regarding learning.	76.9	66.7	88.0	68.4	50.0	100.0
I set high goals and expectations for myself.	75.0	74.1	76.0	73.7	50.0	90.5
In general, my teachers...						
make me feel shy or uncomfortable around them.	22.0	26.9	16.7	31.6	25.0	10.5
think I am a poor student.	10.2	16.0	4.2	15.8	9.1	5.3

* Data reported are percentages of students agreeing or strongly agreeing with each item.

SECTION V COMPONENTS OF ASPIRATIONS: LEVELS OF INSPIRATION AND AMBITIONS

In the survey, specific questions are asked to determine students' level of self-perceived aspirations. Student aspirations is defined as an individual's ability to identify and set goals for the future, while being inspired in the present to work toward those goals. In order to measure students' level of aspiration, it is necessary to gain information about student perceptions along two dimensions: inspiration and ambitions.

Inspiration

reflects that an activity is exciting and enjoyable to the student and the awareness of being fully and richly involved in life here and now.

Ambitions

measures responses which reflect the perception that an activity is important as a means to future goals. It assesses students' perception that it is both possible and desirable to think in future terms and to plan for the future.

Students' perceptions may reflect only one of the dimensions. For example, some students may be very engaged in numerous activities in the present, but have no future goals or see little value in setting goals. In contrast, other students may set short- and long-term goals, yet exhibit minimal effort in the present to work toward those goals. Ideally, students with high aspirations have the ability to identify and set goals for the future (ambitions scale), while being inspired in the present to work toward those goals.

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SECTION VI CONDITIONS AFFECTING STUDENT ASPIRATIONS

Schools have recognized aspirations as an important component in the growth and development of students of all ages. Student aspirations can be defined as an individual's ability to identify and set goals for the future, while being inspired in the present to work toward those goals. The challenge that lies in front of all of us is to identify the conditions in school which effect an individual's aspirations. Time has shown us that many "common sense" ideas about students and schools have fallen to the wayside and have been replaced with educational rhetoric. For the past ten years, the University of Maine, College of Education's direct involvement in studying aspirations in schools has provided us an invaluable learning laboratory. We have had opportunities to witness first hand the dynamics and complexities of the school environment. We have found that teachers, administrators, and support staff can make a difference in the lives of the children they serve when they provide an environment in which student aspirations can flourish and grow.

The National Center for Student Aspirations has identified eight conditions which are believed to have positive effects on the development of student aspirations in schools. The descriptions of these conditions provide an interpretive template that frames how students can be viewed and how schools can positively support the development of student aspirations. The conditions represent a return to common sense: back to the fact that there is nothing more important than the education of an individual. The identified conditions are not exhaustive, but each is essential if we are to have students--from preschoolers to post-doctoral candidates--who exhibit inspiration, ambitions, and consequently, aspirations. It should be the goal of schools to create and sustain these conditions in the lives of every student (see Tables 17 - 24.)

Aspirations Survey Report

Mt.Desert Island High School
Grade 9

May 27, 1997

Center for Research and Evaluation
College of Education
University of Maine
Orono, Maine 04469-5766
Phone: (207) 581-2411
FAX: (207) 581-2423

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Aspirations Survey Results

With over a decade of research in student aspirations, research units of the College of Education at the University of Maine have earned international recognition as leaders in the study of this topic. Through research and practical experience in schools, several factors have been identified which appear to affect student aspirations. These factors emphasize the importance of putting the student at the center of any school initiative or program. Specifically, eight conditions have been identified: achievement, belonging, curiosity, empowerment, excitement, mentoring, risk-taking, and self-confidence. These conditions do not represent an exhaustive list, but rather a fundamental core for schools that want students to have inspiration, ambitions, and, consequently, aspirations.

The *Aspirations Survey* was designed as a tool to assess the conditions in the school that affect student aspirations. The purpose of the survey is not to tell schools/districts what they already know about themselves, but rather to assess the conditions that affect student aspirations. To the extent that the eight conditions cut across both organizational and individual dimensions, schools can exercise interventions to foster these essential conditions.

The results of the survey are organized to provide the school community with a "snapshot" of student perceptions of themselves and their school environments at the time they completed the *Aspirations Survey*. Specifically, the results will describe: (1) how students spend their time and (2) their perceptions of themselves, of their classroom experiences, and of their classroom teachers. The combination of these factors influences the development of student aspirations. These results, in conjunction with other information about your school, community, and students, should be very useful in school reform efforts.

The report is divided into six sections.

Section I - **Framework for analysis**
Section II - **Demographics**
Section III - **Time allocation for specific activities**
Section IV - **Students' self-perception**
Section V - **Components of aspirations: levels of inspiration and ambitions**
Section VI - **Conditions affecting student aspirations**

The results of the Aspirations Survey are clear and comprehensive, but they are meaningless unless one understands what all the numbers indicate. This section of the report is designed to help you understand the results and to create meaning for the survey. The Aspirations Survey Report is a reflection of your school; therefore, it is important that you take ownership of the data and begin the process of interpretation. The purpose of the report is not to compare schools, but rather to determine if you are satisfied with the results from your school. The key to analysis is to begin the process with an open mind and take an honest look at what the data are telling you. Here are some principles to guide you:

- First, look at the indicators that depict the whole population of students (i.e., how they spend their time, their levels of inspiration and ambitions, their level of achievement motivation, and their level of general enjoyment of life.)
- Second, begin the process of studying the data from the eight conditions — *achievement, belonging, curiosity,* and so on. It is important to review each condition separately, otherwise the data may become confusing and unmanageable.
- After your analyses of student characteristics and of the conditions affecting the students are complete, begin to look for connections among the results that may explain student responses. For example, if students in general claim to do very little homework, is it because they see very little value in it, because teachers do not check homework, or because they find the subject matter boring?

Finally, keep in mind that,

- analyzing the results is a process not an event.
- no one understands the dynamics of your school like you do.
- it is okay and useful to ask students to help in this process.
- it takes a great deal of time to analyze results well.
- you should look for comparisons within your own school (i.e., by grade level and gender.)
- the best way to analyze and make sense of the data is to talk about it with colleagues and students.

- you are analyzing the results of the survey to improve your school, not to find fault and place blame.
- every school or individual may see something different in the data. This is not only common, but healthy for purposes of discussion.

Analyzing data is a complex and multifaceted process. It takes time, commitment, and openness. You have the opportunity to see how your students perceive themselves and their school. The key to maximizing the survey analyses is to learn from the results and develop action plans for improving the current situation. Technical assistance and facilitation of this process is available by contracting an agreement with the National Center for Student Aspirations at the University of Maine, College of Education.

All scores throughout the report are presented as percentages of the total number of student responses, rounded to the nearest tenth of a percent.

Table 1. Age of Students (%)	
14	15
7.7	92.3

Table 2. Grade of Students (%)
9
100.0

Table 3. Gender of Students (%)	
Female	Male
46.2	53.8

Table 4. Parents' Education	Mother's Education (%)	Father's Education (%)
Did not finish high school	7.7	7.7
Graduated from high school	61.5	69.2
Attended college	30.8	23.1
Graduated from college	0.0	0.0

Table 5. Self-described Academic Ability of Students (%)		
Below Average	Average	Above Average
15.4	38.5	46.2

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The *Aspirations Survey* asked students to indicate the amount of time spent each week on the following activities: homework, hanging out with friends, participating in sports or hobbies, reading for pleasure, working part time, watching television, and spending time with their families. These activities account for large amounts of time in the lives of most students. The activities are delineated as follows:

HOMEWORK:

work assigned by teachers or other school assignments of an instructional nature. The time allotted to study and to classes represents a significant portion of the productivity of students. While time spent in classes is determined by school, time allocated to school work outside of the classroom is not, and thus it is an important aspirations indicator.

Table 6. Student reports of time (hours) spent per week: DOING HOMEWORK

		NUMBER OF HOURS PER WEEK						
	N	0	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	11+
Total	13	15.4	23.1	15.4	30.8	7.7	0.0	7.7
Female	6	16.7	16.7	16.7	33.3	16.7	0.0	0.0
Male	7	14.3	28.6	14.3	28.6	0.0	0.0	14.3

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HANGING OUT WITH FRIENDS:

time spent with friends of the same or opposite sex, alone or in groups. Students typically spend considerable time conversing with others, exchanging ideas, feelings, norms, and values.

Table 7. Student reports of time (hours) spent per week: HANGING OUT WITH FRIENDS

		NUMBER OF HOURS PER WEEK						
	N	0	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	11+
Total	13	0.0	46.2	38.5	7.7	7.7	0.0	0.0
Female	6	0.0	50.0	33.3	0.0	16.7	0.0	0.0
Male	7	0.0	42.9	42.9	14.3	0.0	0.0	0.0

PARTICIPATING IN SPORTS OR HOBBIES:

activities or interests pursued outside of instructional time in school, which may or may not be related to school. Structured leisure activities such as sports, hobbies, and social interactions represent culturally defined pursuits. Some of these activities require participation with a predetermined system of rules, whereas others involve self-defined activities rather than competitive ones.

Table 8. Student reports of time (hours) spent per week: SPORTS OR HOBBIES

		NUMBER OF HOURS PER WEEK						
	N	0	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	11+
Total	13	7.7	15.4	23.1	30.8	0.0	7.7	15.4
Female	6	0.0	33.3	16.7	33.3	0.0	16.7	0.0
Male	7	14.3	0.0	28.6	28.6	0.0	0.0	28.6

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READING FOR PLEASURE:

reading that is not associated with school work. Magazines and newspapers may comprise much of the leisure reading for students.

Table 9. Student reports of time (hours) spent per week: READING FOR PLEASURE

		NUMBER OF HOURS PER WEEK						
	N	0	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	11+
Total	13	7.7	46.2	23.1	15.4	0.0	7.7	0.0
Female	6	0.0	50.0	33.3	16.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
Male	7	14.3	42.9	14.3	14.3	0.0	14.3	0.0

WATCHING TELEVISION OR VIDEOS:

watching television programs or videos, playing video games, and listening to music. This represents a significant leisure activity for many students. In an era when these activities have become more enticing for individuals, the impact of a "media prepared version of the world" may be significant.

Table 10. Student reports of time (hours) spent per week: WATCHING TV/VIDEOS

		NUMBER OF HOURS PER WEEK						
	N	0	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	11+
Total	13	0.0	15.4	15.4	7.7	23.1	15.4	23.1
Female	6	0.0	16.7	33.3	16.7	16.7	16.7	0.0
Male	7	0.0	14.3	0.0	0.0	28.6	14.3	42.9

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WORKING PART TIME:

gainful employment that results in income for the student. In moderation, working part time is often considered educational as a part of the student's life that will expand to become a major productive activity.

Table 11. Student reports of time (hours) spent per week: WORKING PART TIME

		NUMBER OF HOURS PER WEEK						
	N	0	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	11+
Total	13	46.2	15.4	7.7	15.4	0.0	7.7	7.7
Female	6	50.0	16.7	16.7	16.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
Male	7	42.9	14.3	0.0	14.3	0.0	14.3	14.3

SPENDING TIME WITH FAMILY MEMBERS:

time spent either with the entire family or individual family members. It is often believed that adults as a whole invest very little time with young people. Individuals learn much about being an adult by observing, imitating, and interacting with adults. Thus, spending time with family members can be important in a young person's development.

Table 12. Student reports of time (hours) spent per week: SPENDING TIME WITH FAMILY

		NUMBER OF HOURS PER WEEK						
	N	0	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	11+
Total	13	7.7	15.4	53.8	15.4	0.0	0.0	7.7
Female	6	16.7	0.0	33.3	33.3	0.0	0.0	16.7
Male	7	0.0	28.6	71.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

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SECTION IV STUDENTS' SELF-PERCEPTIONS

Aspirations cannot be simply defined as individual dreams or ambitions. Rather, aspirations are related to students' sense of self and how it relates to important elements of success in their lives. This section consists of questions designed to assess how students perceive themselves on two dimensions: (1) *Achievement Motivations* and (2) *General Enjoyment of Life* (see Tables 13 and 14).

Achievement Motivation refers to a sense of goal orientation--accomplishing more--reaching higher, but sensing the connection between present action and goal realization.

Table 13. ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION

Percent of students who agree or strongly agree	TOTAL	FEMALE	MALE
I like to be very good at what I do.	100.0	100.0	100.0
I feel I can do just about anything if I put my mind to it.	92.3	100.0	85.7
I never make plans or set goals for myself.	23.1	16.7	28.6
Getting good grades is not important to me.	38.5	16.7	57.1
I can be very disciplined and push myself.	75.0	100.0	57.1

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The category *General Enjoyment of Life* deals with the assurance, the confidence, the participation in positive experiences necessary to successful and effective functioning.

Table 14. GENERAL ENJOYMENT OF LIFE

Percent of students who agree or strongly agree	TOTAL	FEMALE	MALE
I usually feel tired and bored.	69.2	50.0	85.7
I often have trouble getting motivated to do things.	53.8	33.3	71.4
I don't seem to succeed no matter what I do.	30.8	33.3	28.6
I am not interested in very many things.	23.1	33.3	14.3
I am often in a good mood.	69.2	83.3	57.1

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SECTION V COMPONENTS OF ASPIRATIONS: LEVELS OF INSPIRATION AND AMBITIONS

In the survey, specific questions are asked to determine students' level of self-perceived aspirations. Student aspirations is defined as an individual's ability to identify and set goals for the future, while being inspired in the present to work toward those goals. In order to measure students' level of aspiration, it is necessary to gain information about student perceptions along two dimensions: inspiration and ambitions.

Inspiration
reflects that an activity is exciting and enjoyable to the student and the awareness of being fully and richly involved in life here and now.

Ambitions
measures responses which reflect the perception that an activity is important as a means to future goals. It assesses students' perception that it is both possible and desirable to think in future terms and to plan for the future.

Students' perceptions may reflect only one of the dimensions. For example, some students may be very engaged in numerous activities in the present, but have no future goals or see little value in setting goals. In contrast, other students may set short- and long-term goals, yet exhibit minimal effort in the present to work toward those goals. Ideally, students with high aspirations have the ability to identify and set goals for the future (ambitions scale), while being inspired in the present to work toward those goals.

Inspiration indicates that an activity is exciting and enjoyable to the student and indicates an awareness of being fully and richly involved in life here and now.

Table 15. Students' level of INSPIRATION

Percent of students who agree or strongly agree	TOTAL	FEMALE	MALE
Most of the things I do in school I find enjoyable.	61.5	83.3	42.9
School causes a great deal of stress for me.	84.6	83.3	85.7
When I'm at school, time seems to fly by.	69.2	66.7	71.4
School is important to my life on a regular basis.	69.2	83.3	57.1
I find it hard to concentrate in classes.	61.5	66.7	57.1
I find excitement in almost every class I attend.	46.2	66.7	28.6

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Ambitions assesses the perception that an activity is important as a means to future goals. It assesses the perception that it is both possible and desirable to think in future terms and to plan for future goals.

Table 16. Students' level of AMBITIONS			
Percent of students who agree or strongly agree	TOTAL	FEMALE	MALE
What I learn in school will benefit my future.	84.6	83.3	85.7
I give little thought to my future.	38.5	33.3	42.9
I am looking forward to a successful career.	92.3	100.0	85.7
I have high goals and expectations for myself.	84.6	83.3	85.7
I don't expect very much of myself in the future.	23.1	33.3	14.3
Most of the things I learn in school are important to my future.	92.3	83.3	100.0

SECTION VI CONDITIONS AFFECTING STUDENT ASPIRATIONS

Schools have recognized aspirations as an important component in the growth and development of students of all ages. Student aspirations can be defined as an individual's ability to identify and set goals for the future, while being inspired in the present to work toward those goals. The challenge that lies in front of all of us is to identify the conditions in school which effect an individual's aspirations. Time has shown us that many "common sense" ideas about students and schools have fallen to the wayside and have been replaced with educational rhetoric. For the past ten years, the University of Maine, College of Education's direct involvement in studying aspirations in schools has provided us an invaluable learning laboratory. We have had opportunities to witness first hand the dynamics and complexities of the school environment. We have found that teachers, administrators, and support staff can make a difference in the lives of the children they serve when they provide an environment in which student aspirations can flourish and grow.

The National Center for Student Aspirations has identified eight conditions which are believed to have positive effects on the development of student aspirations in schools. The descriptions of these conditions provide an interpretive template that frames how students can be viewed and how schools can positively support the development of student aspirations. The conditions represent a return to common sense: back to the fact that there is nothing more important than the education of an individual. The identified conditions are not exhaustive, but each is essential if we are to have students--from preschoolers to post-doctoral candidates--who exhibit inspiration, ambitions, and consequently, aspirations. It should be the goal of schools to create and sustain these conditions in the lives of every student (see Tables 17 - 24.)

1. Achievement

Achievement requires effort, accomplishment, citizenship, and perseverance. Parents and educators have traditionally used a narrow view of *achievement* that refers only to academic achievement, innate ability, or to who is "best in the class." A broader view defines *achievement* as the act or accomplishment of completing a task through effort and perseverance. This definition supports students' initiative; therefore, *achievement* is normative not only in terms of test scores and intelligence quotients, but in terms of personal accomplishments and perseverance. The concept of *achievement,* then, is not solely dependent on innate capacities, but includes students' personal efforts as well.

Table 17. Condition of ACHIEVEMENT

Overall, when I think about my classes...	TOTAL	FEMALE	MALE
I stop trying when I don't understand some things.	23.1	16.7	28.6
I believe I can always improve.	100.0	100.0	100.0
In general, my teachers...			
tell me to keep trying even when I struggle.	84.6	83.3	85.7
like it when I try my best even when I get a wrong answer.	69.2	100.0	42.9
tell me I'm doing a good job when I try my best.	76.9	100.0	57.1
let me know it is important to be successful in school.	66.7	80.0	57.1
never check assigned homework to see if it is done correctly.	38.5	33.3	42.9

* Data reported are percentages of students agreeing or strongly agreeing with each item.

2. Belonging

Belonging is a relationship between two or more individuals characterized by a sense of connection, support, and community. *Belonging* includes the experience of being a valued member of a group and the diminishment of barriers between groups. *Belonging* excludes relating to others as objects or potential competitors. The sense of *belonging* is a necessary condition for well-being and social learning. The experience of *belonging* provides engagement and is essential to understanding oneself as competent. This kind of relationship is generally believed to increase intrinsic motivation, for it encourages and fosters a sense of competence.

Table 18. Condition of BELONGING

Overall, when I think about my classes...	TOTAL	FEMALE	MALE
I never have the opportunity to work with others.	38.5	50.0	28.6
my thoughts are accepted.	84.6	83.3	85.7
In general, my teachers...			
encourage me to help others in class.	76.9	83.3	71.4
accept the fact that different students have different opinions.	69.2	100.0	42.9
value my opinions.	69.2	83.3	57.1
do not value different opinions.	8.3	20.0	0.0

* Data reported are percentages of students agreeing or strongly agreeing with each item.

3. Curiosity

Curiosity is characterized as inquisitiveness--an eagerness and strong desire to learn new or interesting things--and a desire to satisfy the mind with new discoveries. *Curiosity* is an intrinsic motivation that exists at birth. The intensity of *curiosity* diminishes over time due to a habituating effect of the environment. Educators must create school environments that promote questioning and creative exploration to counteract this trend and allow for the perpetuation of *curiosity*.

Table 19. Condition of CURIOSITY

Overall, when I think about my classes...	TOTAL	FEMALE	MALE
I learn about things I did not know before.	84.6	100.0	71.4
I explore problems.	76.9	66.7	85.7
I seek solutions to complex problems.	69.2	66.7	71.4
In general, my teachers...			
want students to be interested in learning.	92.3	100.0	85.7
make me feel uncomfortable when I ask for help.	30.8	16.7	42.9
encourage me to learn new things.	83.3	83.3	83.3
discourage me from asking questions.	30.8	16.7	42.9

* Data reported are percentages of students agreeing or strongly agreeing with each item.

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4. Empowerment

Empowerment refers to students' ability to take control and gain mastery of their actions. Most *empowerment* research in education attempts to empower schools, principals, or teachers. However, a school system that supports the condition of *empowerment* is one that strives to and ultimately succeeds in empowering its students. An innate desire for self-determination is reached when individuals have the ability to choose among real choices. *Empowerment* can only be achieved in an environment that promotes mutual trust and the acceptance of individual rights, responsibilities, options, and beliefs. Thus, students are more likely to be empowered in schools where all individuals are respected and encouraged to be independent thinkers and actors.

Table 20. Condition of EMPOWERMENT

Overall, when I think about my classes...	TOTAL	FEMALE	MALE
I am not allowed to express my thoughts.	38.5	33.3	42.9
In general, my teachers...			
allow me to make choices about what I learn.	53.8	66.7	42.9
ask for my opinions/ideas.	83.3	100.0	66.7
treat boys and girls the same.	66.7	80.0	57.1
make it difficult for me to "be myself."	33.3	40.0	28.6

* Data reported are percentages of students agreeing or strongly agreeing with each item.

5. Excitement

The condition of *excitement* involves being interested in something, being emotionally involved, or having an intense experience or desire of some kind. *Excitement* is associated with being self-confident, curious about life, and prepared to meet the challenges of the day. *Excitement* routinely involves a response to a challenge that individuals have freely chosen and that they feel competent in tackling. Students who do not experience this freedom of choice and competency may experience anxiety rather than *excitement*. Schools that foster *excitement* provide diversity in the delivery of their lessons, safe and secure environments, respect for individuality, personal challenges, and mentoring.

Table 21. Condition of EXCITEMENT

Overall, when I think about my classes...	TOTAL	FEMALE	MALE
I leave with a feeling of accomplishment.	69.2	100.0	42.9
I am usually bored.	53.8	33.3	71.4
I learn about things in the real world.	61.5	83.3	42.9
I never have fun.	30.8	0.0	57.1
In general, my teachers...			
make class exciting.	58.3	60.0	57.1

* Data reported are percentages of students agreeing or strongly agreeing with each item.

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6. Mentoring

Mentoring, an intervention designed to maintain students' motivation, has many goals. A successful *mentor* will stimulate new interests, model constructive ways of relating to the world, convey important information about problem-solving and exerting control over one's environment, and provide a caring, stable environment in what may otherwise be a chaotic set of experiences. *Mentors*, either teachers or other students, should exhibit patience, encouragement, and assertiveness, and they should have high expectations of their protégés.

Table 22. Condition of MENTORING

Overall, when I think about my classes...	TOTAL	FEMALE	MALE
no one encourages me.	41.7	40.0	42.9
classmates never talk to me about what I am doing.	38.5	50.0	28.6
In general, my teachers...			
care about my success in class.	92.3	100.0	85.7
serve as role models to me.	41.7	80.0	14.3
expect me to succeed and help me to do so.	92.3	100.0	85.7
care about my problems and feelings.	69.2	100.0	42.9

* Data reported are percentages of students agreeing or strongly agreeing with each item.

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7. Risk-Taking

Risk-taking is defined as making decisions based on information about the potential losses involved and about the significance and probability of such losses. Successful *risk-taking* is a deliberate and thoughtful activity that results in making healthy, sensible, and rational choices. This process requires practice. Schools can encourage *risk-taking* by providing an environment that allows students to experience the excitement associated with successful decision-making and adequate support for unsuccessful risks. Students must learn to gather information about a given course of action, examine the options, and make plans to minimize dangerous risks. *Healthy risk-taking* is associated with creativity, courage, and innovation; all of which are important in student aspirations.

Table 23. Condition of RISK-TAKING

Overall, when I think about my classes...	TOTAL	FEMALE	MALE
I feel comfortable asking questions.	84.6	66.7	100.0
I feel comfortable going to another student for help.	83.3	80.0	85.7
In general, my teachers...			
do not allow me to explore as much as I want to.	30.8	33.3	28.6
encourage me to find answers on my own.	84.6	100.0	71.4
support me when I take chances in the classroom.	61.5	100.0	28.6
are too critical and insensitive to others.	30.8	33.3	28.6

* Data reported are percentages of students agreeing or strongly agreeing with each item.

8. Self-Confidence

Self-confidence refers to the extent of students' belief in themselves. It is related to self-regard, self-esteem, self-concept, self-worth, and self-respect. *Self-confidence* is characterized by a positive and healthy outlook on life and a looking inward for approval rather than seeking it only from others. Teachers, parents, and peers all have the ability and potential to help students' *self-confidence* and thus enhance the quality of their academic and personal achievement.

Table 24. Condition of SELF-CONFIDENCE

Overall, when I think about my classes...	TOTAL	FEMALE	MALE
I am confident in my ability to do well.	75.0	80.0	71.4
I find it enjoyable regardless of what others may think.	38.5	50.0	28.6
I dislike almost everything I do.	30.8	33.3	28.6
I have a generally positive outlook regarding learning.	83.3	80.0	85.7
I set high goals and expectations for myself.	69.2	83.3	57.1
In general, my teachers...			
make me feel shy or uncomfortable around them.	23.1	33.3	14.3
think I am a poor student.	23.1	16.7	28.6

* Data reported are percentages of students agreeing or strongly agreeing with each item.

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CURRICULUM VITAE

Barbara Kent Lawrence has enjoyed an eclectic career which includes teaching anthropology, sociology and history at schools in Washington, DC, Connecticut and Maine, directing a small museum, founding and running a real estate brokerage and construction firm on Mount Desert Island in Maine, and working as a real estate broker in Boston. At present she is writing a book under the imprint of Rob Weisbach for William Morrow, Publishers and planning to return to teaching.

The author may be contacted as follows:

Barbara Kent Lawrence
34 Upton Street
Boston, MA 02118

email: 75117.3401@compuserve.com